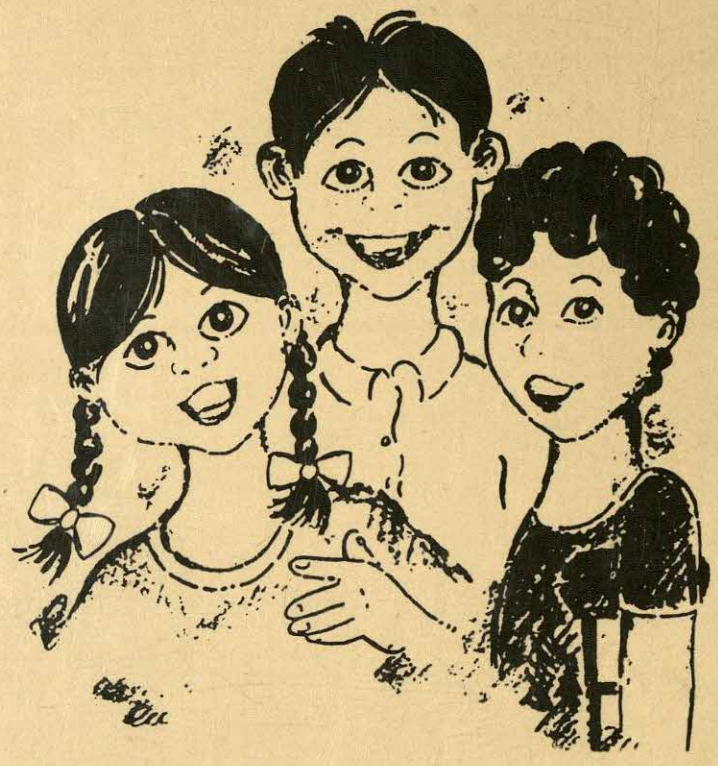
The Primary Years



Towards A Curriculum Framework

Department of Pre-School & Elementary Education
National Council of Educational Research and Training
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016

STRATEGIES TO ENSURE PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES / PANCHAYETS AND MUNICIPALITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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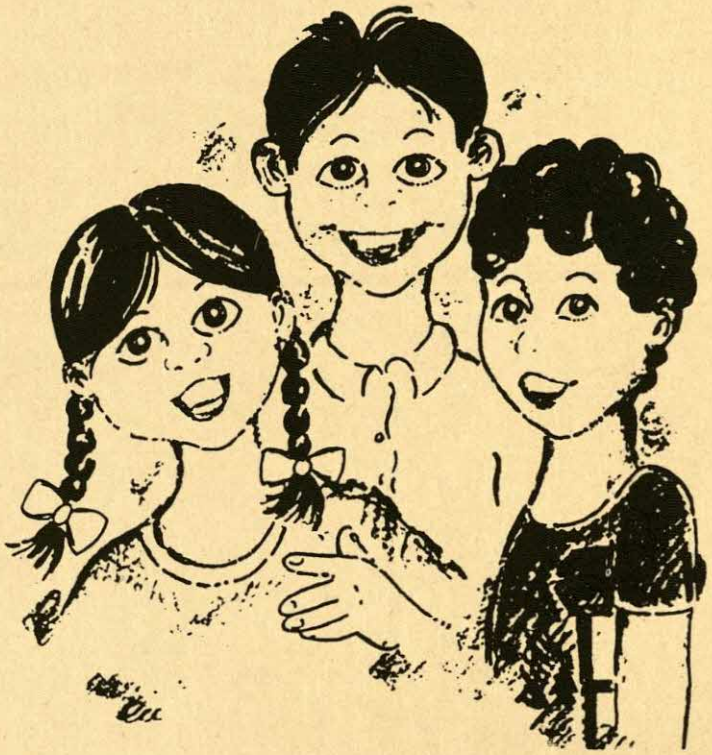

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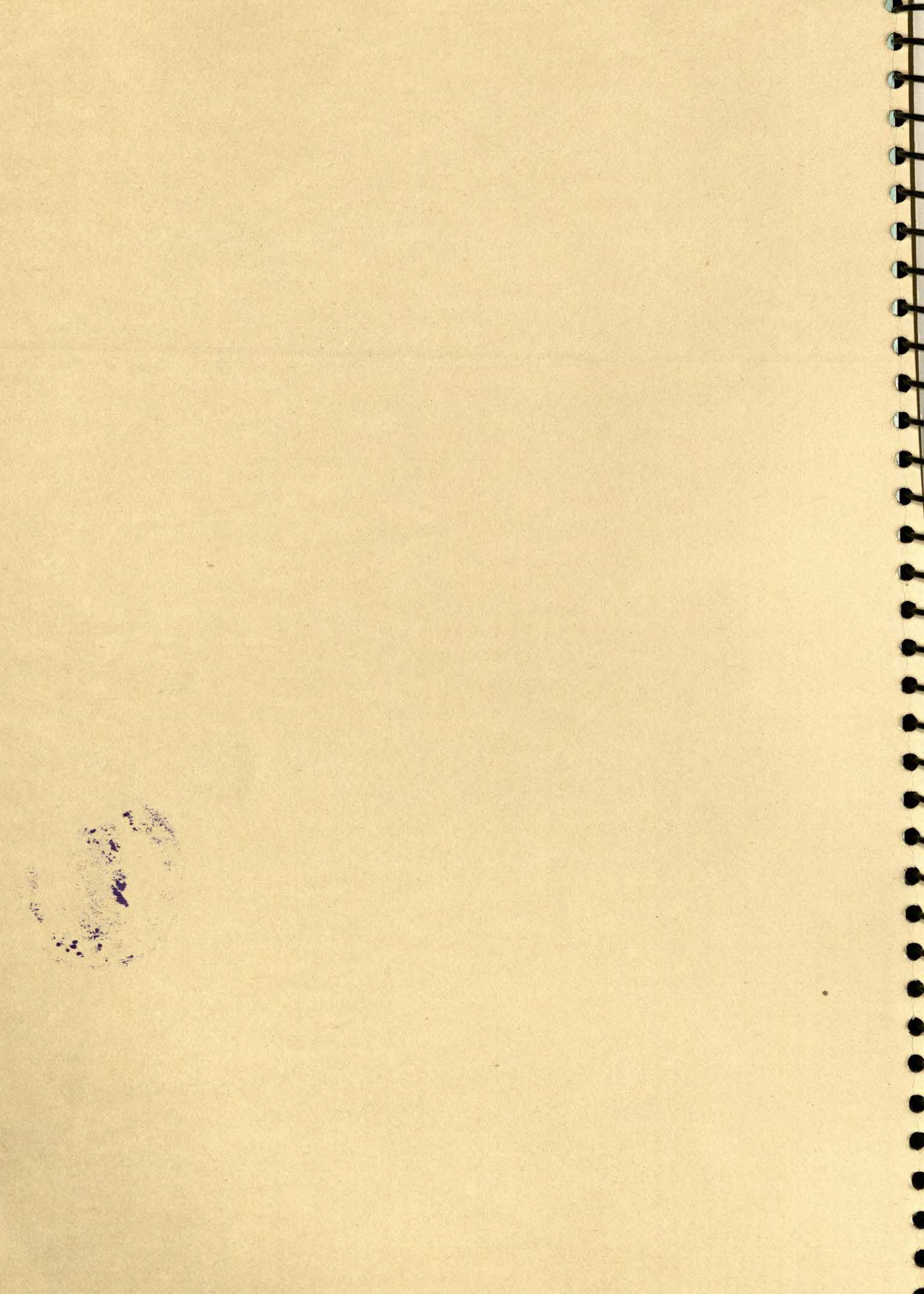

The Primary Years

Towards A Curriculum Framework

Part-1

"If I Cannot learn the way you Teach me
Can you not Teach me the way I can Learn?"

Department of Pre-School & Elementary Education
National Council of Educational Research and Training
Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi-110016

1997

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PREFACE

The National Curriculum Framework was revised in 1988 in view of the Resolution of National Policy on Education out of which one was the identification of the MLLs. In 1991 The Ministry for Human Resource Development (MHRD) brought out a document titled "Minimum Levels of Learning at Primary Stage", which has since become the guiding force for all subsequent curriculum related activities at the primary level. The feedback received on the implementation of the MLL programme brought to the forefront some critical concerns related to both the concept and its pedagogical implications. These concerns called for immediate review of the situation.

A seminar was organized by National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) in December 1996 on 'Reviewing Priorities in Primary Level Curriculum' at the Indian Institute of Education, Pune in which representatives of both government and non-government organisations participated along with some international agencies. After intensive deliberations the consensus emerged that there is a need for NCERT to immediately take a relook at the Curriculum Framework for the primary stage in the light of the emerging concerns. NCERT was advised to bring out a document. proposing a revised Curriculum Framework which should also place the MLLs in the right perspective.

As a prelude to the preparation of this document NCERT constituted a core group of professional experts in the area to guide the exercise of revision. NCERT also conducted a series of interactions with primary school teachers from some of the states to elicit their views and understand the needs of the situation in the field.

The process that followed in developing this document has been a very stimulating and enriching experience for each one of the faculty members of DPSEE and our colleagues from other Departments . It involved six months of discussions and debates among the faculty members and has therefore seen several stages of drafting and redrafting of the manuscript.

In a nutshell, we in the DPSEE faculty have lived through the document during the past six months. The document in draft form is now placed for comments and suggestions prior to it taking its final form.

Venita Kaul
(Prof. & Head)

A WORD ABOUT THE DOCUMENT

The primary stage of education, not only serves as the foundation for further stages of education but also as a foundation for life. It thus has its unique character and requires a different treatment, as compared to the other stages of education. At this stage the "child" and not the "subject" (disciplines) is the focus. 'The Primary Years' has been envisaged in this perspective as a proposed Curriculum Framework.

The document is in two parts. **Part I** discusses significant aspects which provide the framework for curriculum development and implementation. It comprises seven chapters.

Chapter I Analyzes in historical perspective the current situation with respect to primary education curriculum. It further discusses some emerging concerns which form the basis for relooking at the curriculum.

Chapter 2 Outlines the expected profile of the child at the end of the primary schooling keeping in view the present demands on the child as well as the future challenges. This was considered necessary to provide broad directions in framing the curriculum with the "child" as the focus.

Chapter 3 Details out the proposed framework in view of the concern above. It also attempts to clarify certain misconceptions and highlights the new thrusts suggested.

Chapter 4 Examines the needs and characteristics of the child at the primary stage with a view to make the curriculum child- centred and relevant.

Chapter 5 Focuses on how to make the teaching learning process child friendly and activity based in terms of methods, materials and assessment.

Chapter 6 Highlights favourable learning conditions necessary for ensuring "access with success".

Chapter 7 Identifies the ways in which the teacher can be helped to make the proposed framework a reality.

Part 2 of the document details out the learning outcomes for each of four suggested curricular areas, supported by hints for teaching learning and assessment strategies. In addition to these it also provides broad guidelines for handling multigrade situations and adoption of Integrated Approach to both curriculum development and methodology of teaching. It also provides guidelines for teaching the language of instruction when it is not the home language of the child.

This document is addressed to the policy makers, practitioners and all others interested in the area of primary education. In view of this an attempt has been made to make the document as user friendly as possible. We hope the document will generate wide discussion leading to better policies and practices in the area of primary education.

The Document Contains

A Word about the Document

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Chapter 1

Primary Education - the Story so far

PRIMARY EDUCATION
THE STORY SO FAR

Flashback

Once upon a time, many, many years ago , in what is now known as the **Ancient Period**, education was very different from what it is today. In those days there were very few children who had the opportunity to get education. The teacher was the main authority who decided what to teach the children and how to teach them . He decided this on the basis of his own knowledge and skills , the prevailing social values and religion and also the capacities of each individual child.

As the social structure changed over the years, due to the **emerging caste system** the content of education also underwent a change. Opportunities for education continued to be limited to a select few and that too only to boys .The teacher continued to decide what to teach and how to teach. But in terms of content , the teacher began to focus more on skills and knowledge related to the occupation each child was expected to adopt as an adult in addition to education in religious and moral values.

Then came the **Medieval Period** when again education continued to remain confined to boys of selected classes of society . These were from families of priests, landlords, traders, money-lenders . But it was now the needs of these different types of occupations which controlled what was to be taught to the children . The focus shifted to teaching the 3 R's (reading, writing and 'rithmetic) and the religious texts.

As we move further into the **Modern Period** of history , i.e. towards the middle of the nineteenth century , we can see two major developments that influenced the area of education. These were :

- a political and social awakening against foreign rule in the country
- the need of the rulers to prepare people for lower level administrative jobs.

The focus in this period shifted therefore from planning education from the point of view of meeting the needs of the individual and community to meeting the

needs of the administration. The above influences led to the establishment of two kinds of schools:

- schools controlled by the foreign rulers
- schools controlled by the community i.e. the indigenous schools

The change in the goal of education also brought about changes in what was to be taught in the schools. The concept of **different stages in education** emerged around this time with the introduction of 'middle schools' since English , which was the language of the administration , could be introduced only after 3 to 4 years of education in the local language. The duration of elementary education thus got extended to 7 to 8 years of education. The content of education also became much wider to include up to the middle school stage, the 3 R's, History, a Second Language, Geography, Nature study , Physical Education and Hygiene and Drawing. Allowing for variations from area to area, other subjects also got introduced like Science , Agriculture and Handwork. Opportunities for education however continued to be confined to children from selected classes of society.

As we thus move along the years in the history of our country we realize how the content and nature of education has constantly been changing in response to whatever were the changes in social and political conditions prevailing at the time. The **major** factors that appear to have decided these changes were:

- who is to be educated
- who has the authority to decide what should be taught

Towards the later part of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century there was a great deal of social and political awakening in the country which led to the demand by Indian leaders for **Universal Education** i.e. opening the doors of the schools to all children in the country. As a result, in the earlier part of this century , along with the political activities which led to our freedom in 1947, there was also widespread expansion of elementary education across the country. Gradually more and more children began to come into the fold of education. The content of education however continued to be dictated by the needs of the administration.

A very significant step towards reform in school curriculum was the proposal of **Basic Education** of seven years' duration by Mahatma Gandhi which was

endorsed by the first Conference on National Education held at Wardha in 1937. This was a major effort to develop an indigenous national system of education which was in tune with the needs and aspirations of the people. Buniyadi Shiksha (Basic Education) focussed on :

- all round development of the child
- development of a secular national outlook
- integration of and correlation between knowledge and work
- learning through experience
- use of mother tongue as medium of instruction and learning
- emphasis on not merely acquisition of knowledge but character building

A detailed syllabi consisting of language (mother tongue) , Mathematics , General Knowledge and Craft prepared under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain was adopted in several provinces where Congress was in power.

Following the independence of the country, Basic Education was adopted as the national pattern of education. This was possibly the most appropriate decision at that time . Unfortunately, it did not get the required support in terms of suitable facilities in schools, relevant changes in teacher training and most important of all, creation of awareness in the community about its relevance and significance. It thus failed to take off properly and got rejected as a low grade education programme.

Efforts continued in the years that followed to restructure school education in the country with a view to suit national conditions. The major issue with regard to elementary education at this time was providing education to all children in the age group of 6 to 14 years so as to be able to fulfill the constitutional directive under Article 45 which affirms that " **the state shall endeavour to provide within a period upto ten years from the commencement of this constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years"** .In other words, the concern shifted around this time from providing education to the ' *select classes* ' to providing education to the '*masses*'. This shift brought with it, its own challenges.

It was in this context that in 1952-53 the Secondary Education Commission and again in 1964-65 the Education Commission made specific recommendations for improving school education. The Secondary Education Commission which

focussed on the secondary level of education, put forward the idea of multipurpose schools and recommended an 11 year pattern of school education. The Education Commission took a more comprehensive view of the entire educational system in relation to national Development. It recommended a 10+2+3 pattern of education which was accepted by the parliament in 1968. The adoption of this policy led to the formulation of the "**Curriculum for the Ten Year School : a Framework" which was brought out by NCERT in 1975.** This was a major effort at restructuring the content and process of school education at the national level. Based on this framework, NCERT prepared curricula and syllabi including instructional materials for all stages of school education. While some states adopted the materials as they were , others made changes to suit specific needs.

However , since this effort was not followed up with a comprehensive plan to link the suggested changes in the curriculum with the process of teaching and learning, teacher training and examination reform specially at the primary stage, the implementation of this curriculum remained uneven across the country. This led to widespread disparities in attainment levels of students in different parts of the country. A major concern that emerged was that of curriculum load. The Ishwarbhai Patel Committee examined this problem in 1977 and made some specific recommendations.

Around the same time a number of **experimental projects** were undertaken like Primary Education Curriculum Renewal (PECR),Nutrition Health Education and Environmental Sanitation(NHEES), Comprehensive Access To Primary Education (CAPE), Children's Media Laboratory and Early Childhood Education Project which tried out some significant innovations in curriculum development and implementation at the pre-primary and primary stages. The outcomes of these experiments which were coordinated by NCERT and carried out in collaboration with the states , fed into the later efforts in review of curriculum.

In 1984 , NCERT also carried out a detailed study of the problem of curriculum load. The report of the study "Curriculum Load at the school level -A Quick Appraisal" analysed the problem and concluded that the factors responsible for the load related more to:

- lack of physical facilities and academic inputs
- lack of innovations in classroom practices
- poor quality of instructional materials

- inadequate orientation of teachers
- dominance of the examination system

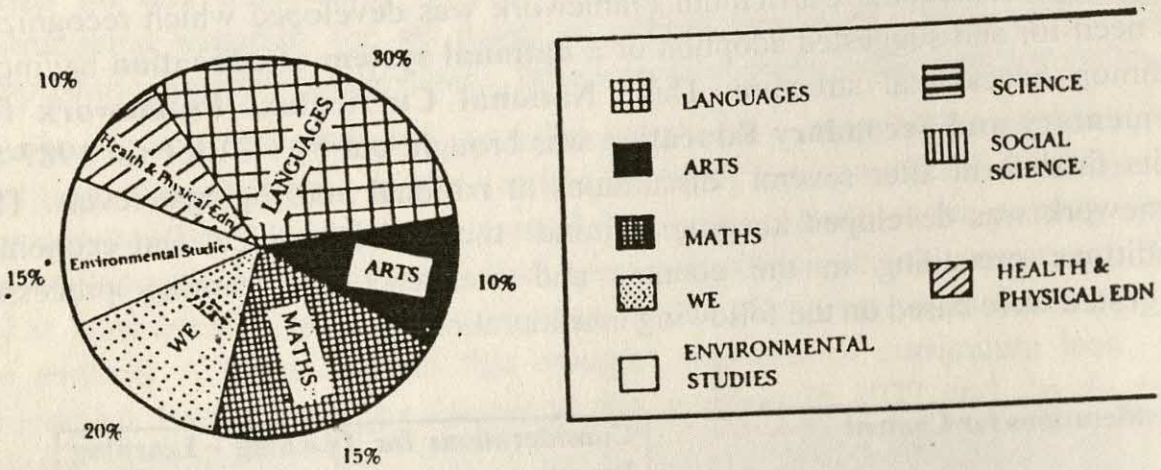
The Scene Today

In 1986 the National Policy on Education was formulated and this was reviewed and revised in 1992. Based on the programme of action developed to implement the policy , a National Curriculum Framework was developed which recognized the need for and suggested adoption of a **national system of education** having a common educational structure .This **National Curriculum Framework for Elementary and Secondary Education** was brought out by NCERT in 1987-88 in its final form after several discussions at national and regional levels. The framework was developed keeping in mind the social, political and economic conditions prevailing in the country and the teaching- learning processes suggested were based on the following considerations:

Considerations for Content	**Considerations for Teaching - Learning Process**
equality of educational opportunity	education for all round development
preservation of cultural heritage	child- centered approach
constitutional obligations	facilitating learning how to learn
strengthening of national identity and unity	facilitating creative expression
character building and inculcation of values	inculcation of a scientific temper
global perspective	
protection of the environment and conservation of national resources	interface between education and world of work
observance of small family norm	continuous and comprehensive evaluation
future oriented education	utilization of media and technology

The National Curriculum Framework provided a common scheme of studies which at the elementary stage included six subject areas illustrated below, along with the time allocation to each.

Scheme of Studies



The Curriculum Framework suggested that after taking into account the number of days required for holding terminal examinations , school functions etc. at least **200 days** in a year should be available for effective teaching. A school day at primary stage should be for **five hours** of which four hours should be for instructional work. The duration of each class period should be around **40 minutes**. This national curriculum framework has served as a reference point for all activities in the area of curriculum development since 1988.

The National Policy on Education (1986/1992) also emphasized the need for laying down **Minimum Levels of Learning** (MLLs) for each stage of education so as to ensure that some minimum academic standards are maintained across

the country. In 1990, the NCERT carried out the exercise of identifying the MLLs for the primary stage for each curricular area. This document which was largely based on the experiences of and data from the PECR Project and the Minimum Learning Continuum developed under the project , remained for limited circulation since it was not accepted by the Ministry for Human Resource Development (MHRD). Instead, the MHRD set up another committee to draw up the MLLs for the primary stage. The report of this committee titled 'Minimum Levels of Learning for the Primary Stage" was published by the NCERT on MHRD's request in 1991. The MLL focussed on three key aspects in terms of curriculum. These were 'equity', 'competency' and 'mastery'. 'Equity' emphasised the need for equal opportunity to all children to learn up-to a certain defined level. The MLL's were therefore applicable for all children across the country. 'Competency' brought in the shift in emphasis in teaching-learning from the common concern of teachers regarding completion of syllabus to a concern with how many children have already learnt. The 'mastery' concept emphasised the need to bring up each child's level of learning to a stage of excellence which was operationally defined as 80% of children performing at 80% in terms of level of attainment so that there are no learning gaps.

A nation-wide MLL programme was then launched across the country to bring about quality improvement in primary education. The MLL programme stressed the need for competency based rather than syllabus based teaching at the primary stage so as to ensure that not only should all children stay in school but should also be able to 'master' the competencies or levels of learning laid down for each curricular area in the relevant grade. The MLL has today become a buzz-word in primary education in the country and has been the single most significant influence on primary education curriculum in the last few years which has guided all aspects of the curriculum including development of teaching- learning materials.

The National Policy on Education also stressed the need to make primary education a joyful experience for children by making it more child- centered. Along with the MLLs , an almost parallel influence in the last few years has therefore been that of several experiments conducted by states in the name of **Joyful Learning.** These experiments have been largely supported by UNICEF and have focussed more on creating 'child-friendly and joyful' environments for children in grades 1 and 2 primarily, by encouraging learning through 'play' and

'activity' .In terms of teaching- learning methodology , the emphasis today is thus on what is popularly referred to as ' **child-centered , activity-based teaching'**.

The period from 1986 onwards has seen a range of valuable initiatives carried out by both **government and non-governmental agencies** which have attempted to find solutions to problems of universalizing primary education ,in locally relevant ways. Some of these include Lok Jumbish , Diganter, Bodh , Shiksha Karmi project in Rajasthan, Eklavya and Rajiv Gandhi Mission in Madhya Pradesh, Rishi Valley Projects in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project, Centre for Learning Resources in Maharastra, Bihar Education Project, Andhra Pradesh Primary Education Projects to name a few . Under the **District Primary Education Programme** (DPEP) , which is being implemented in 14 states of the country at present , many innovative efforts have been made to develop curricula and textbooks with participation of a wider section of people including teachers, parents and other users of the curriculum. The effort is also to develop these keeping the 'child' as the focus of all materials and classroom practices.

SOME EMERGING CONCERNS

Ten years have passed since the last National Curriculum Framework was developed. The world has changed a lot in these ten years and is even now continuing to change at a very fast pace. Economic reforms have taken place, socio-political changes have occurred and advancements in information technology have tended to bring the world much closer together. The disparities between the 'have's and "have not's" has also become even wider. The amount of knowledge available to us has increased by leaps and bounds with a pace that almost makes 'new' knowledge of today 'obsolete' tomorrow! There is also a continuous and very visible influence of media which one can clearly see today , both on the child and the adult . We can also see at the same time a constant erosion taking place of those basic values which were so much a part of our own culture and traditions. This situation definitely calls for a review of the curriculum again to ensure that it is responding to the needs and demands of these changing times.

In these last ten years there have also been some major developments in the area of primary education itself which too have given rise to some concerns. These also point to the need for a re-look at the curriculum. Let us discuss what these concerns are and what could be the ways in which these could be addressed.

Readiness to Learn and Joyful Learning

In the last few decades there has been an active effort in the country to bring all children into primary school irrespective of class, caste, gender , region etc. This has brought about a noticeable shift from education of **'classes to education of masses'**. large number of these children who are now coming into the schools are first generation learners i. e. they come from families in which no one has been to school ever before. They have not seen anyone go to school from the home and therefore do not have what is known as a role model to follow or imitate in this regard. As a result they or their family members often do not have the required interest or motivation which is necessary for ensuring that they come to school regularly.

In many cases the home environment of the children is also not very stimulating; they may not be exposed to any reading material in the home at all like newspapers, magazines, books or even letters from friends and relatives. They do not listen to stories or poems or have parents who can spare the time to answer their endless questions. As a result of these :

- they may not understand the need or value of education
- they may not thus see the relevance of going to school and learning the school related skills
- they may not also develop the necessary readiness for learning these skills

What is this 'readiness' that is needed ? Readiness is getting ready for entry to formal learning. It is required in terms of developing interest or enthusiasm for school .It is also necessary in terms of developing certain specific skills and abilities which are a prerequisite for learning the 3R's in a meaningful way. For example, to learn to read with understanding it is necessary to have an adequate vocabulary , the skills of differentiating between sounds, as also between shapes

and be able to relate sounds with words. Similarly, for learning mathematics children must form the required pre-number concepts and be able to classify and place objects in order skillfully prior to learning and understanding actual numbers.

Researches conducted in NCERT have shown that most children across the country, do not possess these skills/abilities adequately when they come into Class 1. Research in the area of mathematics has also shown that those children who got a good base in readiness experiences continued to do much better in mathematics even upto the level of Class 5 stage. Another research finding which we need to consider here is that one of the reasons for children dropping out of school is that they do not find meaning or enjoyment in what happens in school.

With this background, the National Policy on Education (1986/92) emphasized:

- **Early Childhood, Care and Education(ECCE)** for 3 to 6 year old children through a play and development oriented programme which would serve not only as a foundation for life long development but also help to develop in children the necessary readiness for schooling. It cautioned against the formal teaching of the 3 R's at the early childhood stage.
- A **Joyful, Child-Centred Activity-Based Programme** at the primary stage which would help children not only learn by doing, but also enjoy what they learn and feel interested in continuing to come to school.
- Since a large number of children still come directly into Class 1 without going through any **ECCE** programme, a compensatory **School Readiness** programme was developed by NCERT for them for the first few weeks/ months of Class 1 which would in a 'capsule form' provide them the necessary readiness for taking on the Class 1 curriculum.

The last few years have therefore seen both expansion of ECCE facilities in the country through the centrally sponsored **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** programme all over the country as well as several projects in the area of joyful learning at the primary stage. These generally include School Readiness as a part of the curriculum. The idea of attractive , child-friendly

classrooms has come up with walls painted with pictures and blackboards around the room at the level of children to enable them to write and draw as and when they want to.

Where then is the concern?

The concern emerges from the way in which these three programmes are translated into practice in the field situations in terms of their content and methodology. Let us take a look at what is happening in the field in each of these three kinds of programmes ?

- In 90% of the ECCE programmes instead of a good , play and development based readiness programme children are taught reading, writing and arithmetic in a formal manner as is done in primary schools. This has been reported in many surveys conducted by NCERT and other organizations. The children are made to go through these learning tasks when they are neither maturationally or in terms of experience 'ready' for them. Their foundation therefore remains weak. It is also a matter of concern that in some states while under the DPEP children in Class 1 go through a 'readiness ' programme, children younger to them going to the ECCE centres learn the 3 R's!
- **School Readiness programme** is meant for children who have not been through a good ECCE programme. It is expected to be comprehensive in content covering all readiness aspects and using the play-way method. In many cases where it has been introduced it remains confined at best to stories and songs and the teachers do not get to see its link with the primary curriculum as an essential preparation for it. It is therefore conducted mechanically without any element of assessment of whether children have really attained the readiness skills before they are made to move on with the curriculum at the primary stage.
- Joyful Learning as a concept is desirable for all primary classes. Its interpretation however interms of methodology varies at different stages of primary education e-g At class 5 level also working on a project could be a joyful learning experience for children. In practice it has been found that often the joyful learning is understood as the play-way method for Classes 1 and 2

and stays limited to again a lot of songs and stories and games which may or may not lead to any active learning on the part of the children. This situation has even provoked the kind of reaction by some that "*there is a lot of joy in the class but little learning!*" A critical aspect missing in these programmes often is the monitoring or keeping track of children's progress in learning. Another concern in this regard is the inadequate understanding at many levels of what should be activities suitable for the older children in Classes 3 to 5 which would be challenging enough for them and will promote their learning.

⇒ The need therefore is :

to plan the curriculum for ECCE and primary in an integrated and continuous manner with a complete understanding of the importance of readiness experiences for all children but in particular the first generation learners .Since children come into Class 1 with varied backgrounds, some with and some without a good ECCE base, it will be necessary for the teacher to assess if children have the required skills and concepts before proceeding with the teaching of the 3 R's.

to understand the interests and capabilities of children at different stages of development and interpret 'child-centered' methodology accordingly for the different grades in line with these, while planning the curricula.

Minimum Levels Of Learning(MLLs)

The **minimum levels of learning** have been a very major influence on primary education curriculum across the country as a whole in the last few years. It has certainly drawn the attention of all associated with primary education , particularly the teachers , towards the need to ensure that all children learn whatever is specified for a particular grade. It has also made teachers sensitive to some extent to the idea of directing their teaching- learning towards development of some competencies in children and not merely towards passing on of information. This is referred to as 'competency - based teaching'. However , despite these gains, in

some respects the MLL programme has tended to take primary education away from the right track and give it a very narrow and distorted focus. To be able to see where it went wrong, it is first necessary to discuss why it came into being at all.

The idea of identifying the minimum levels of learning was first expressed as early as in 1975 in the Curriculum for Ten Year School - A framework which stated that " ***it will be helpful to identify realistically the basic minimum to be achieved in respect of each and every child and leave enough scope for individual schools to go as far beyond this basic minimum as their circumstances permit."*** As already mentioned , this had led to the development of the document called the Minimum Learning Continuum by NCERT under PECR Project. Later in 1986 the NPE again brought forward this idea because of the continuing disparities in achievement levels across the country.

The intention in emphasizing the MLLs was to help teachers focus on not merely 'completing the syllabus' as they were doing earlier but on ensuring that most if not all the children in the class learn what they are expected to learn. And what were the MLLs expected to do ? They were to serve merely as some indicators of the child/ children's progress- --a kind of a checklist which could help the teacher (and anyone else interested) keep track of the progress of the individual child or groups of children in terms of some essential learning outcomes. **The MLLs therefore had implications mainly for guiding evaluation of children with the emphasis that evaluation should be considered as a tool of learning and not as a means of passing judgment on a child's abilities.**

The MHRD had therefore asked the Committee that was assigned the task of identifying the MLLs to identify these for Classes 3 and 5 and not for each class separately . The idea was that since all children do not learn at the same pace and cannot be expected to learn the same amount within one academic year, this would allow for individual differences in capacities to learn and for flexibility in teaching- learning. Keeping in mind the overall goal of education i.e. all round development of the child , the committee was asked to identify the MLLs for each of the six areas of the primary level curriculum. **How did the MLLs, then, become a matter of concern?**

- The Committee identified these for only three of the six curricular areas ie Language, Maths, EVS, while the requirement was for all the six curricular areas. As a result, the other three areas ie Art Education, Health and Physical Education and Work Experince which are also very important from the point of view of all round development of the child , got consciously neglected.
- In the actual implementation , while the MLLs were intended to have a well-defined but limited role of helping the teacher monitor and guide the progress of children by using these as some indicators of progress, they actually **began to be seen instead as ' the total curriculum' for the primary stage for each of the five classes.** It was almost like the 'important and likely examination questions' dictating the total syllabus for a particular subject in the higher classes! Everything related to teaching - learning i.e. textbooks, teaching aids, charts , posters even wall displays and activities were planned only with respect to the identified MLLs.
- **Competencies cannot be broken down into steps in a linear way** i. e. they do not necessarily get acquired by children in a sequence from one competency to another and then to another unidirectionally. Instead , children need to move back and forth in a kind of a spiral form within the same learning area again and again in order to learn it well. Also, they need more than just one activity or experience to learn a particular thing . At the same time they can pick up many competencies from any one activity /lesson or experience. In other words, children's way of learning is more holistic and not segmented in nature . The MLL scheme which guided not only the preparation of instructional materials but also the classroom teaching **did not take the nature of children's learning into consideration.** Instead , it presented each lesson, activity , material with the competency number on it thus seeking a one-to-one relationship between the learning input and the particular learning outcome. Also, by sequencing the competencies in a linear way ,e.g., first having a lesson for 'listening skill' in the Language textbook followed by lessons for 'speaking', the entire approach was not really in tune with the way children learn. It, therefore, did not turn out to be really conducive for children's learning .
- The MLL scheme laid emphasis on what was termed as **'mastery level'**. Mastery referred to the level at which MLL is to be acquired . According to

this scheme, MLL was considered 'attained'/ 'mastered' only when a child had acquired 80 percent of the specified competencies and at least 80 percent of the class was able to achieve this level. This was emphasized in order to realize the overall goal of the programme which was to ***"convert low achieving schools into high achieving schools***". Contrary to the MHRD requirement of identifying MLLs for only grades 3 and 5 , the committee listed these for each of the five primary grades separately. This did not fit in well with the original idea of 'mastery learning' given by Caroll which clearly says that every child can learn upto the same level(except those that are differently abled) provided there is flexibility provided in learning time to allow for individual differences in pace of learning. Since the levels of learning were also not really the 'minimum' but the ' desirable' in terms of their difficulty level, and these too were expected to be attained rigidly by all children within one academic year at 80 percent **mastery level this became an unrealistic expectation in the absence of the required flexibility in terms of learning time.** The scheme thus did not provide for the **multi- level** situation in any given classroom in terms of ability levels. This was particularly so in the existing classroom situations in the country which consist of a large proportion of **'first generation learners'** thus making the class composition, even more heterogeneous. Also, the minimum levels of learning were expected to be mastered in school situations which often did not even provide ' the minimum learning conditions' to the children. Achievement surveys across the country therefore continued to show very low levels of learning in the larger school system despite the efforts under the MLL programme.

- The idea of 'mastery' also did not fit in well with all categories of identified levels of learning . For example, one could say that a particular child had 'mastered' the competency in mathematics related to addition of two digit numerals or the competency of 'recognition of alphabet' . But, there are **many competencies** or **learning outcomes which do not lend themselves to the idea of mastery** , particularly those related to the affective domain e.g., **'to be able to respect the rights of others'** or those related to ' creativity', since these are often not 'measurable' in quantitative terms. And these may well be more important ultimately in terms of the overall goals of education. The MLLs listed for Environmental Studies were more in terms of content areas rather than 'competencies' which again made the application of 'mastery level'

unsuitable. The application of this scheme thus tended to become very rigid and mechanical and out of tune with the larger goals of primary education.

- The main focus of the MLL scheme with its emphasis on **'learning' by all children rather than 'teaching'** should have been on classroom management in terms of time and space, **teaching methodology catering to different learning styles** and effective and feasible procedures for assessment, particularly in the context of the typical multi-grade situations and large numbers of children in the primary classes. Unfortunately these were the areas including the crucial **area of remedial teaching which did not get enough attention.** The learning levels thus continued to remain low.

In view of these concerns any effort at taking a relook at the curriculum now must :

⇒ attempt to redefine the rightful place of MLLs in the curriculum at the primary stage so that they are able to adequately serve the purpose for which they were identified and emphasized in the first place. In this context there is need to also put evaluation in correct perspective and evolve some feasible assessment procedures which can help teachers keep track of children's progress and take corrective measures as and where necessary.

⇒ again give to the primary education curriculum a holistic focus stressing on the all round development of the child particularly by bringing the other three curricular areas of Art Education , Health Education and Work Experience into the fore-front.

⇒ bring in some flexibility into the school system and curriculum by reorganizing it in terms of levels rather than grades thus allowing for individual differences in the styles and pace of learning.

Curriculum Load

Another major concern with regard to the curriculum has been that of 'load' and 'relevance'. In 1992 ,the MHRD set up a Committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Yash Pal to examine this problem. The committee's report stressed the problem of what it called the 'load of non-comprehensibility' which it believed was worse than the physical load of carrying heavy bags! There is a general opinion among parents, and often teachers also that the curriculum for primary classes is on the 'heavy' side. What exactly could be responsible for creating this load? Let us consider some possible reasons :-

- **The load can be due to a mis-match between the quantum or size of the syllabus and the conditions in which it has to be taught.** The mis-match can occur because of:

a) **Inadequate teaching-learning time available**: The curriculum is planned according to the National Curriculum for 210-220 teaching days whereas across the country teachers in government schools particularly do not manage to get even 150 days of teaching time due to many extra duties like election duty, surveys etc. As a result they tend to rush through the syllabus and are not able to devote enough time for handling children's difficulties.

Instructional time also becomes inadequate for the given curriculum if the teachers follow the child- centred methodology which though a surer way of learning requires more time since it involves active participation of each child. While the methodology is recommended the volume of the syllabus is not decided keeping this fact in mind!

b) **Multi-grade schools**: Almost 84 per cent schools in the country have multi-grade teaching situations i.e. each teacher has to handle more than one grade at a time. The curriculum is planned for single- grade situations and does not therefore provide for this large majority of schools. The teacher's time is therefore divided even further for handling a particular class.

c) **Large class sizes**: With the existing thrust on enrolling all children into school the number of children in schools is gradually getting larger and still larger. The recently introduced mid-day meal scheme has resulted in many schools literally overflowing with children. With teacher-pupil ratios like 1:60,80 or even 100 at times the possibilities of the teacher ensuring understanding by every child and still completing the syllabus are very remote

d) **Multi-level nature of a class:** Any given class of children in a typical school will necessarily be multi-level in nature since it will have children with varying experiences and ability levels. This situation becomes even more so with the current efforts to bring children from many different backgrounds into school together. The curriculum is drawn up with a uniform approach in view for all children considering all 40 to 50 children at one level! The mis-match between 'teaching' and 'learning' thus will inevitably lead to 'load of non-comprehension' for a large number of children.

⇒ There is need therefore to plan the curriculum realistically keeping the field conditions in view and providing for adaptations in terms of content and methodology for different situations.

- **The load can also occur from the mis-match between the difficulty level of the expected learning outcomes and the developmental level of the children for whom these have been identified**. For example, there is a general concern that the mathematics in the early primary classes is very difficult for children at that age since they are till then not capable of the kind of abstract thinking skills required to understand it.

⇒ There is need therefore to review the curriculum from this point of view for which again it is very necessary to first have an understanding of child development particularly the capabilities and limitations of children at different stages of development.

- **The problem of load can also occur if the content does not have relevance for the child because it may relate to something which does not exist in the child's environment . The child is therefore not able to relate to it.** For example, talking of rivers to a child living in a desert area who has no idea what a river could be! Particularly in the area of Environmental Studies this

becomes a major problem because of the wide diversities in the country. This concern has led to encouragement of decentralizing of curriculum development to state /district levels. The need to make the teacher sensitive to the importance of making teaching-learning contextually relevant to the child therefore becomes crucial.

- **The issue of medium of instruction is also of importance here. A large number of children in our country study in a medium which is not their home language**. The curriculum , however , assumes that all children are learning in their mother tongue! While undoubtedly children in the early years can pick up many languages, using a language as the medium of instruction requires a much higher level of language competency. In the absence of this competence, communication and understanding both get affected and the problem of 'load' occurs. Recent research studies carried out by NCERT on Readability of its own and some state textbooks at the primary stage highlight a major problem with the Mathematics and Environmental Studies textbooks whose language readability is low for children and therefore affects their performance.

⇒ There is need therefore to evolve a different approach to language learning for children who do not study in their mother-tongue. There is also need to ensure that the language difficulty level of the textbooks of other subject areas is similar to that of the language textbook which is in most cases at least planned according to the level of children.

- **The load in the curriculum can also occur due to overlap and repetition of content or even inconsistency across different subject areas.** For example often children have to learn many topics like 'Seasons' or 'Food and Nutrition' both in EVS1 and 2 which not only adds to the volume of work but also to the confusion! Similarly , many areas of Health Education, Value Education or Work Experience can be very meaningfully integrated with EVS but as separate curricular areas increase the load for the teacher and the child. Often the Language textbook have chapters covering certain EVS concepts which are above the level of understanding of children. e.g. a NCERT's language textbook of class 5 has a lesson on Madame Curie which includes many difficult science concepts inappropriate for the class.

⇒ There is need to examine the curriculum across subject areas and remove inconsistencies and repetitions.

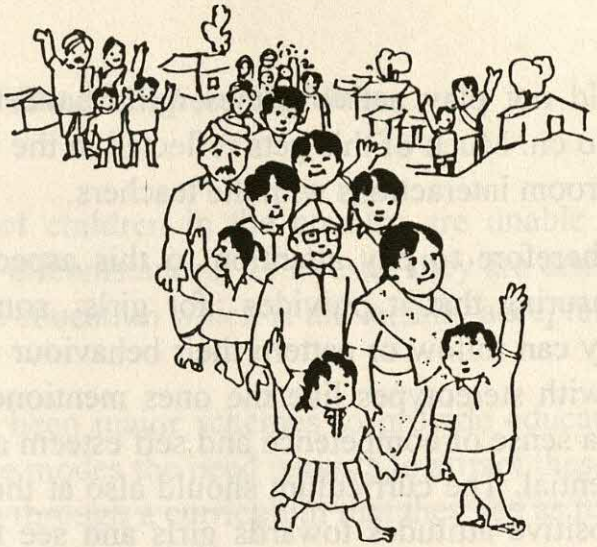
- Another important aspect that needs to be considered is that a child learns and perceives in a **holistic** way and not in terms of different subjectwise compartments.

⇒ From this point of view also there is need to review the curriculum to see to what extent the different areas can be integrated meaningfully so that not only is the load reduced but the child also relates the learning better with his/her environment.

Relating School to Community

- Mahatma Gandhi had stressed the need to bring the **school and community closer "if education is to serve as a force for creation of a new social order".** Today , particularly with the efforts on to bring all children into school , the need for a close relationship becomes even more significant.The need is not only to motivate the community to send children to school but more than that make the curriculum more relevant and linked to the needs and way of life of the local community. This is necessary for the community to see the benefits of educating their children while also ensuring that it helps the children improve their own quality of life. With the recent trend of decentralizing the process of curriculum development this aspect is getting some attention . The idea of having a core national curriculum framework within which each state/district can make its own detailed curriculum is a step in this direction. However, this remains a major challenge given the wide diversities so typical of our country.

⇒ A revised curriculum therefore must provide for flexibility to address diverse needs and contexts specific to different communities.



⇒ With the recent enactment of the Panchayti Raj System, the role of the community, particularly the Village Education Committees , Mothers Associations etc. becomes not only more important but also more active , particularly in supporting the school activities and providing an on site facility for monitoring. The curriculum at present does not provide adequately for this involvement either in terms of reaching out to the community or building in this component of inviting community support in the transaction itself. These are needs more relevant in today's context and therefore require due attention.

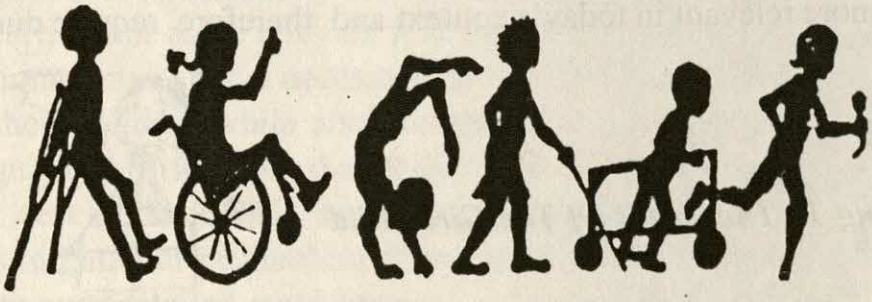
Responding To The Needs Of The Girl Child

- **A major concern today in the area of primary education is not only ensuring that all girls come into school but also catering to their specific needs in framing the curriculum**. This is particularly so at the primary stage since this stage is very important from the point of view of attitude formation and development of a child's self esteem. The existing curriculum has been often found to be gender insensitive in terms of the roles and experiences reflected in it which tend to only further strengthen certain traditional ideas or stereotypes like-girls cannot do well in mathematics, girls should not talk

loudly, girls should not play active games, girls have to grow up and get married only and so on. Much of this gets reflected in the learning materials as well as in the classroom interactions with the teachers.

⇒ There is a need therefore to pay attention to this aspect in developing the curriculum by ensuring that it provides for girls some appropriate role models which they can follow or pattern their behaviour on. There is also the need to do away with stereotypes like the ones mentioned above and thus help girls develop a sense of competence and self esteem and aspire to achieve to their fullest potential. The curriculum should also at the same time serve to help boys form positive attitudes towards girls and see them as equals with equal rights and capabilities. Besides working towards a positive role-definition for girls the curriculum must also draw upon experiences specific to girls or involving girls which often does not happen particularly in areas like preparation of mathematics problems. This would help the girls relate to and identify better with the curriculum and thereby derive greater benefit from it.

Including Children With Special Needs



⇒ **With the recently enacted legislation requiring that the rights of children with special needs** be protected and with the emphasis on including these children in regular mainstream programmes, the need to make necessary adjustments in the curriculum demands attention. The existing curriculum does not provide the necessary scope for meaningful integration and inclusion of the 'differently abled' children in regular pre-schools and primary schools .This is an area which a revised curriculum must address particularly in terms of classroom practices and teacher training.

Meeting Needs of Out-of -School Children

- A large number of children in the country are unable to come into school because of family circumstances. As a result they are denied the opportunity to receive even basic education which is universally accepted today as the right of every child.

⇒ While there have been major schemes to provide education to these children through alternative modes the need persists to attract these children to the folds of basic education through a curriculum that they see as relevant and useful.

Refocusing on Value Education

- The last few decades have seen a drastic erosion of basic values at all levels of society - a concern that is being voiced time and again. Currently, there is a segment of society, including some educationists who believe that value education must get its due place in the curriculum. There is another group which believes that 'values can be caught not taught'! That there should be some effort to revive the basic values through education cannot be denied. This is particularly so at the primary stages which represent the formative years of life. Values internalized at this stage are expected to continue for life.

⇒ The question arises what form should value education take? A revised curriculum needs to give this area due priority and should attempt to find an answer to this question.

Keeping the above concerns in view as well as the demands of the changing times, the need to take a re-look at the curriculum at the primary stage is certainly obvious. However, before we actually get into this exercise it will be necessary to first be clear ourselves about what are those essential things we would like to see in all children by the time they come out of primary school which will help them meet the challenges in the years to come. Then only we can consider what the curriculum should be like. Let us therefore move on to the next chapter and find out for ourselves what is the expected profile of the child at the end of primary school we are to work towards.

Chapter 2

The Child at the End of Primary

THE CHILD AT THE END OF PRIMARY

The challenges in the area of education are many, particularly at the primary stage of education. However, central to all the concerns is the child. In order to proceed in the right direction we need to reflect upon what is it that we would like to give our young children through primary schooling. It is therefore important that we have a clear picture as to what children should be like at the end of the primary school years, while allowing for individual differences amongst them.

This chapter thus focuses upon three important issues:

⇒ **Why is education at the primary stage important** ?
⇒ **What are the aims of primary education ?**
and keeping in focus these aims
⇒ **What is the expected profile of the child at the end of primary schooling that we should work towards ?**

It is only through reflection upon the above questions that we would be in a better position to plan to meet the challenges and concerns addressed in the previous chapter.

Why is education at the primary stage important ?

The primary stage of education coincides with the childhood years that are the most important years in any person's life. This is so, as these lay the foundation for the development of the individual's overall personality. It therefore becomes necessary to provide the child through a good primary education programme in these years, the right kind of **opportunities and experiences in a favourable environment.** If these are given, the child has greater chances of forming desirable habits, developing desirable attitudes and values which will tend to stay with him/her for all time to come.

These childhood experiences are important as they:

- determine to a large extent if the child will be able to develop to his/her full potential later in life
- influence the ways in which the child will behave and adjust in society later as an adult
- provide the right setting and opportunity for those children particularly, whose family situations are not very favourable due to economic or social factors

When we talk about providing the **right kind of experiences** we must be clear about Who are these meant for or in other words who is our target group ?

Who is Primary Education for ?

Primary Education is a must for **every Indian girl and boy**:

- who is living way out in a remote tribal belt
- who is living in a rural environment
- who is living in an urban environment
- who may need to work to supplement the family income
- who may have special educational needs
- who is deprived of a home and forced to live on the street
- who is growing up in a middle/upper class family environment

Infact, primary education is for every child in the age range *4-11 years, no matter where s/he lives or what her/his social or cultural context is like. Let us now examine what we expect primary education to achieve.

**While primary stage is 5+/6+ onwards as per the existing structure, 4 years is mentioned as the starting point to emphasize the need to include ECCE as a compulsory part of Primary Education..*

What are the aims of primary education ?

We expect that every child will benefit from primary education in terms of both **immediate** and **long term gains**.

In terms of **immediate_gains** primary education must help to develop in the child a **feeling of competence** to be able to:

- apply whatever is learnt in school to effectively handle day-to-day situations
- continue further levels of education with confidence

It terms of **long terms gains** it must help the child to acquire those basic **knowledge, skills, attitudes and values** that will:

- serve as a foundation for her/his all round personality development and help the child develop to her/his full potential.
- enable her/him to become a healthy, competent, well adjusted productive individual and citizen in a fast changing world.

In terms of both the gains, developing 'competence' in the child is talked about. **How do we define the term competence** ? By competence we mean ***developing in the child the necessary confidence to handle the demands of the present in ways that will enable him/her to face the challenges of the future. This confidence can be developed by equipping the child with the appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values.***

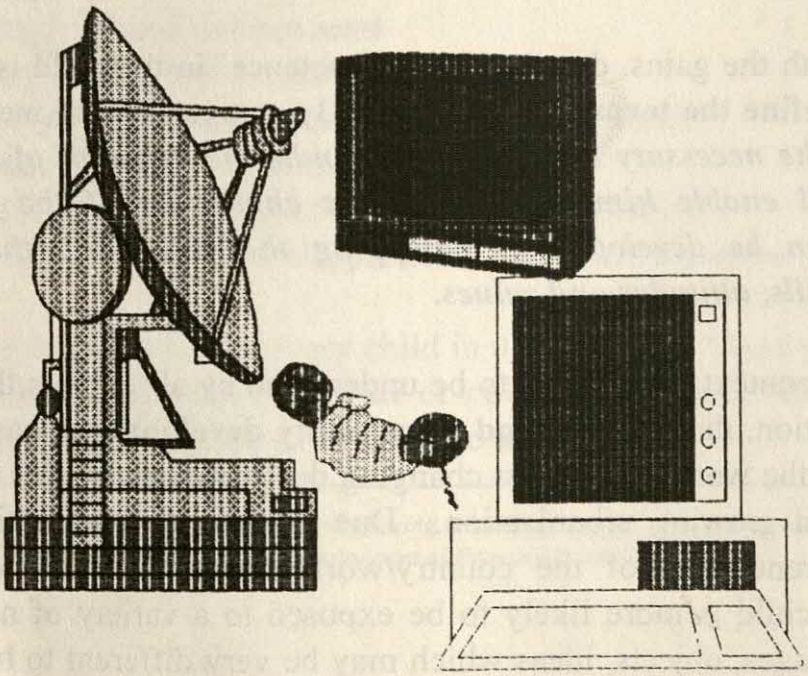
In the present context what needs to be understood by all of us is that the goal of primary education, that is **all round personality development**, has not changed. However, it is the world that is fast changing due to advancements in information technology and growing urbanization. Due to this, communication and travel between different parts of the country/world has become easier and faster. Therefore the child is more likely to be exposed to a variety of new life styles, cultures, languages, objects, ideas which may be very different to his or her own.

This becomes all the more relevant in India, as it is a country full of many more diversities in comparison to most other countries in the world.
In order to enable the Indian child to deal with such a variety of exposure and keep pace with rapid changes, s/he has to be equipped to cope competently with his/her environment. If this is what is required from the child we need to take a relook at what we expect primary education to provide for in the future to children living in different kinds of situations.

What should primary education develop in children ?

This can be considered based on two important assumptions that have been highlighted above:

⇒ **the world is fast changing**
⇒ **information is continuously flowing into the child's world through different media**



Let us now examine what is it that is required from the child, growing up in such a world.

To begin with, every child will be expected to take advantage of and adjust to the continuous flow of a variety of information/knowledge, from sources both inside and outside the school. How the information reaches children maybe different, for example. *A rural child may be exposed to information through listening to conversation ,radio, through viewing hoardings, posters, TV, cinema. Whereas an urban elite child may have access to a variety of other media as well, including computer games, internet etc.*

To be able to take full advantage of this situation the child will need to be **interested** and **motivated** to learn more about what is happening around her/him, *both within and outside the school.* The child will also need to have the skills to be able to learn on her/his own.

For this it will be necessary for every child to acquire not only knowledge, but more important than that, the basic skills of learning so that s/he can learn on her/his own. This would include the skills of literacy, numeracy, problem solving and critical thinking and some basic knowledge too, to help her/him **find/seek/access and understand relevant information, critically examine it and be able to apply it meaningfully in day-to-day situations.** The child will need to thus have the capability for **LEARNING TO KNOW.**

Is it enough for the child to have the skills of learning to know or is something more needed ? On reflection, it is equally necessary that s/he has the skills and right attitudes to put what s/he has learnt into actual practice. In other words children must have the capability of **LEARNING TO DO**. This involves being able to learn by doing and work effectively with her/his own hands, as well as develop a sense of work ethics.

Whether in a rural, tribal or urban set up, a child will need to help with the household/family chores willingly and with a sense of pride. S/he would be required to use simple tools relevant in day-to-day living in his/her own context and to prepare and produce/improvise articles from raw materials using his/her own creativity and imagination. Being able to do things on one's own and with one's own hands is expected to give a child a sense of confidence in herself/himself as well as a feeling of independence.

Being an independent and confident person is important but in a world that is rapidly charging and advancing is it enough ? It has already been mentioned earlier that due to rapid advancements, travel and communication between and within a country is becoming easier. What implications does this have ? The child will obviously be exposed to a wide variety of persons, experiences and situations from day to day. Such an exposure demands that the child should be able to have the **capacity to willingly accept, appreciate and tolerate differences and adjust and learn from them. S/he should also be able to live,**

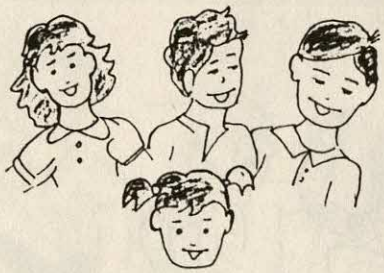
work and play with others as a member of a group/team/community. At the same time the child will need to be aware of his/her own culture, social situation, its strengths and limitations, accept these and be proud of it. The child will thus require the capability of **LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER WITH OTHERS.** This capability will need to be consciously developed even more so, in view of the expected threat of too much time being likely to be spent by the child on the computer, in the years ahead, particularly in urban setups, thus depriving her/him of opportunities for social interaction.

Developing such attitudes and values is necessary to ensure that as adults and future Indian citizens our children adjust well in society. Equally crucial, particularly in today's context when values seem to have **no value** at all, is being able to **promote and practice living in peace and harmony** with others.

School children learn many things which are no doubt useful but they gradually forget that the essential thing is to be human and kind and playful and to make life richer for ourselves and others.

- Jawaharlal Nehru.

All the three pillars, learning to know, do and live together with others finally lead to the child **LEARNING TO BE**, the fourth and last pillar which relates, to the most important goal of primary education i.e the **all round development of the child's personality**. To an extent, it encompasses all the above aspects and gives a holistic direction to them.



In terms of learning to be, therefore, a child at the end of primary schooling should be able to have:

⇒ **skills of communication**
⇒ **a sense of self-esteem and confidence**
⇒ **sense of basic values specific to his/her own context**
⇒ **capacity to take independent decisions in day-to-day situations**
⇒ **a potential for creative expression, imagination and aesthetic appreciation**
⇒ **be able to adjust and cope with the world around her/him**

In view of the above, primary education should aim towards providing the foundation for these four pillars, i.e. learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be, leading to the all round development of the child's personality as depicted in the figure on page - 33 and 34

REMEMBER:

- ***The four pillars are inter-related.***
- ***All the pillars are essential for the all round development of the child.***
- ***Each is being considered separately only to ensure that appropriate learning experiences are provided for each one of them.***
- ***No two children are alike.***
- ***Each child is a unique individual with his/her own interests aptitudes and capabilities. Yet schooling has to lead to the development of some common characteristics.***

ALL ROUND DEVELOPMENT

LEARNING TO KNOW

can listen, speak, read and write fluently and with comprehension in language that is the medium of instruction

is confident and interested in using these skills for

- communicating
- developing his/her creativity
- increasing knowledge

is interested in and has an understanding of some basic mathematical knowledge and skills and is able to apply these to daily life situations

possesses some basic general knowledge and understanding of the immediate environment and is able to apply this knowledge where required

has the inclination and skills to further his/her learning through asking questions, observation, experimentation, exploration, reasoning & problem solving

LEARNING TO DO

effectively handles simple tools of use in his/her daily life situation

is proud of working with his/her hands

demonstrates work ethics and appreciates the need for excellence

LEARNING OPPORTUNITY- CHILD'S

FOUR PILLARS OF

The Four Pillars have been derived from: Learning, the Treasure Within. Report of International Commission of Education for Twenty First Century.

OF THE CHILD

LEARNING TO LIVE TOGETHER

has the ability to make friends with other children and gets along with others

participates actively in sports and other activities of ones choice both in and out of school

demonstrates an attitude of sharing, kindness, cooperation, tolerance and apppreciation of others

leads as well as serves effectively as a member of a team/group in work and play

LEARNING TO BE

feels confident and good about herself / himself as a learner and as a human being

has the ability and confidence to apply her/him own mind and take independent decisions in simple situations encoutered in and out of school

shows respect and concern for others and for the environment

maintains good personal habits

shows interest and confidence in expressing herself/himself through use of creativity and imagination

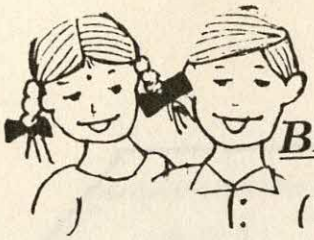
acquires some Basic values specific to his/ her own context

appreciates beauty in environment and shows a sense of aesthetic appreciation

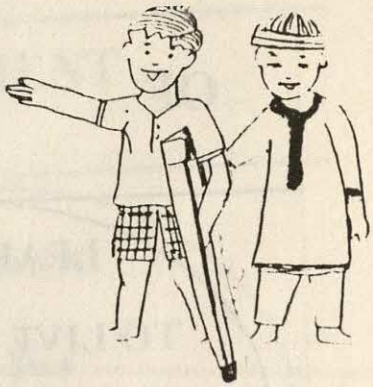
appreciates own culture and traditions and is proud to be an Indian

POTENTIAL - FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT

PRIMARY EDUCATION



BELIEVING IN MYSELF

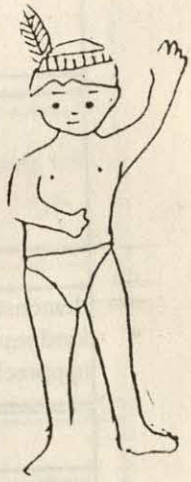


Believing in myself and my friends,
Moving with the times & the trends.

Learning both, to care and dare,
Brooding not, however I fare.

Willing both, to lead & be led,
Using my hands & my head.

Knowing how to talk & walk with grace,
The right values & habits, to embrace.



Accepting others with their good or bad,
Understanding their whims, moods & fads.

Saving the soil, the water, the trees,
The animals in the jungle, the air I breathe.

Proud of my country, its glorious past,
Keeping pace with the world that's changing so fast.

To reach out each day I live,
Practise not only to take but also to give.

To learn, to create, to know, to grow,
Believe in myself more & more.

Sushmita Malik

Chapter 3

Relooking at the Framework

RELOOKING AT THE FRAMEWORK

What should a child be like in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, habits and values on completion of primary stage has been profiled in chapter two. Also chapter one focuses on the concerns emerging out of the current curriculum and also those that are likely to confront us in the years to come.

How do we take care of these concerns? How do we work towards making the expected profile of a child a REALITY?

For identifying ways to tackle these issues, it is very necessary to look for answers to the following questions:

- **What kind of 'learning experiences' should be planned and provided to the children?**
- **What type of 'instructional package' should be developed to provide these learning experiences?**
- **What areas of study would help provide basis for `instructional package' and 'learning experiences' ?**
- **What type of teaching learning strategies including evaluation should be adopted?**

In other words, what should be the **Curriculum Framework** to guide the primary education programmes that would lead to the realization of the expected profile of the child at the end of primary stage?

Though the answers to the above questions are spread in greater detail over the following chapters, this chapter focuses on :

- **defining curriculum and curriculum framework**
- **the need for a curriculum framework**
- **major changes suggested in the proposed curriculum framework**

How do we define the term curriculum?

Over the time, there have been some MISCONCEPTIONS about the `meaning' and `scope' of curriculum. Some times it gets equated with only
- outline of the subject content i.e. syllabi
-list of learning outcomes (competencies) identified as MLLs
- Subject matter included in the textbooks
These `misconceptions' have lead to a number of problems in actual planning and thus resulting in half baked learning on the part of children

Curriculum stands for the **sum total of the child's experiences in the school**.. It aims at the development of whole personality of the child and recognizes that subject matter is not and cannot be learned without learning attitudes, and ways of life at the same time,.

If this is Curriculum then what is Curriculum Framework ?

A Curriculum Framework is a broad outline containing the objectives of education at a particular stage of education, content areas and their scope hints for teaching learning strategies, evaluation strategies, planning teacher education programmes and school management.

Thus it provides sufficient details for concerned agencies including schools and community to be clear about the major elements of the curriculum and the possible steps towards achieving them without dictating the details of how they have to undertake their work..

Why do we need a Curriculum Framework?

Our country is very vast with wide diversities. Therefore the educational needs and contexts vary from region to region and group to group. A curriculum developed at the central level cannot meet the needs of **all the children*** appropriately. However, in order to maintain national standards and ensure meeting the national needs and priorities, a common national curricular framework is necessary.

**`All children' refer to every Indian girl and boy including children with special Educational Needs.*

How does a Curriculum Framework help?

A Curriculum Framework provides guidelines for :

– defining the learning areas with **'child'** as the 'central concern' rather than the '**subject**' (discipline) as the main concern
– defining the scope of each learning area and allocation of time to each area
– planning the learning experiences keeping in view the needs of individual children
– defining the concept of minimum levels of learning and their place in the curriculum
– developing instructional pckage and support material
– planning of training programmmes for teachers and other concerned personnel
– monitoring and evaluation of children's progress
– identifying and managing the school resources , both physical and human including the community

An important feature of any curriculum is that it is never final. Curriculum development is an evolving process because it needs to be periodically reviewed due to changes in social and national contexts.

Curriculum review demands review of the curriculum framework as a first step. The last curriculum framework was reviewed and revised in 1988. As discussed in Chapters one and two, during the past decade a number of new concerns have emerged, some of which are socio-cultural and some specific to primary education.

In view of these concerns, the need has again arisen to take a relook at the Curriculum Framework in order to provide appropriate learning experiences keeping in focus the expected profile of the child at the end of the primary stage of education as detailed out in chapter two.

The Proposed Framework

a) ***Basic Assumptions***: The proposed Curriculum Framework is based on the following basic assumptions:

- ***Though some basic needs are common to all children yet different groups of children have different needs also, arising due to different contextual situations.***
- ***Education is not confined to 3 R's but all round development of a child in terms of the four pillars.***
- ***Each learner comes to school with his/her own fund of knowledge and experiences.***
- ***Every child can learn provided s/he is allowed to progress at her/his own pace and follow her/his own style of learning.***
- ***Learning is a continuous process.***
- ***Learning is spiral and not linear.***
- ***Learning is holistic and not compartmentalized.***
- ***Learning takes place better through actual experiences.***
- ***Children learn better from each other.***
- ***Evaluation is a part of learning rather than a tool for judgment of performance.***

Main Features: In the proposed framework everything is not new. Certain aspects from the earlier framework (1988) have been retained . Some aspects have been reinforced. However, there are some definite changes keeping in view the concerns and expected profile of the child.

WHAT REMAINS	WHAT IS DIFFERENT	WHAT NEEDS EMPHASIS
•Structure i.e 5 years of Primary Education preceeded by ECCE / School Readiness Programme •Institutional set up (Primary & ECCE & Teacher Training) •Curricular Concerns (refer the table in chapter I) •Common Core Components (listed in this chapter)	• ***Four Learning Areas in Place Of Six with a view to:*** - reduce curriculum load - provide holistic learning • ***Level-wise Approach Across the Grades to provide for:*** - individual pace and style of learning - multilevel grouping for teaching learning • ***Approach to Teaching of Language of instruction when it is other than mother tongue to provide for :*** - bridging the gap between home language and school language • ***Focus on Multigrade Teaching Learning to provide for seeking solutions to:*** - problems being faced in large majority of schools so far neglected • ***Integrated Approach as possible Alternative to Subject based Teaching to provide for:*** - holistic learning • - facilitating time management of children as well as that of teachers in multigrade and multilevel teaching learning situation • ***School Community Interaction for :*** - making primary education relevant to the needs of children and the community - involving community in the planning and implementation of curriculum • ***Flexibility in content and approaches to Teaching-Learning process for :*** -providing scope for meeting the needs of out-of- school children in different contexts	• Linkages between ECCE and Primary • Concept of Evaluation as a Tool of Learning • Child-Centered Approach • MLL's as Indicators for Monitoring and Evaluation of Progress

Let us now examine what is different , why they have been suggested and what is reemphasied.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT ?

☞ Reorganisation of Learning Areas:

The four pillars discussed in chapter two i.e. **learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be**, identify the capabilities in terms of knowledge, understandings, skills, values and attitudes to be developed/acquired by all the children at the primary stage. These provide the basis for identification, organisation and time allocation for *learning areas* which will cater to the overall development of each child through providing appropriate and wide range of learning experiences.

Keeping in view the expected profile of the child at the end of the primary stage the six learning areas i.e. language, mathematics, environmental studies I & II , art education, work experience, health and physical education are proposed to be reorganised in the following four Learning Areas:

CORE COMPONENTS:
(to continue as integral part)

- The history of India's freedom movement
- The Constitutional obligations
- Content essential to nurture national identity
- India's common cultural heritage
- Egalitarianism, Democracy and Secularism
- Equality of sexes
- Protection of the environment
- Removal of social barriers
- Observance of the small family norm
- Inculcation of the scientific temper

1. Language

Is the basic tool for all learning, communication, thinking, and creative expression. The skills involved in developing these competencies need intensive practice spread over a long period.

2. Mathematics

Comprises concepts which are structured and hierarchical and developing of skills related to these concepts need systematic understanding and practice

3. Art Education

Focuses on creative and aesthetic development which is very necessary for all the round development of the personality of the child. Being a neglected area so far, it needs to be brought to the fore front.

4. Environmental Education

Merges all areas related to human life and its quality. The child is the most significant part of the environment. To enable her/him to adjust in the environment and make it better, it is very necessary to know about it, to understand it, to value it, to develop skills to protect, preserve and enrich it.

Education is .....to educate your children to understand the whole of life and not merely a segment of life like the physical, emotional, mental, psychological or spiritual; to have not the compartmental, divided outlook but a whole, total integrated outlook on the life....." to bring out through education a human being who is creative, who is capable, who possesses that intelligence which is not burdened and which is not shaped in any particular direction but is total, who is not belonging to any particular society, caste or religion so that through that education and with that intelligence he arrives at a maturity and therefore is capable of making his life, not merely as a technician but as a human being".

J. Krishnamurti

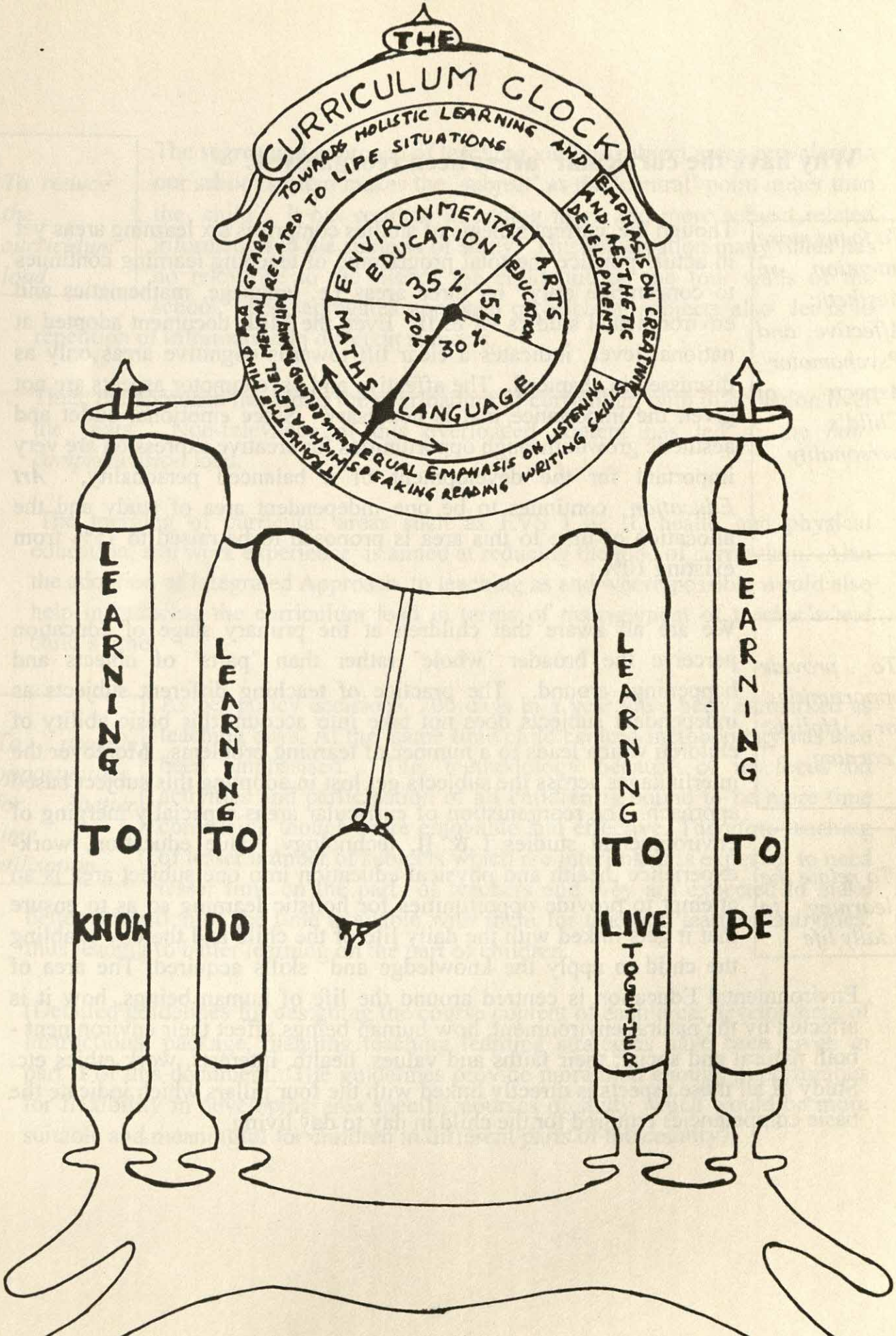
Though these Learning Areas have been given separate identities yet there are underlying interlinkages which can be exploited at the transactional stage of curriculum to make learning meaningful to children.

The Curriculum Clock on the next page indicates the interrelationships amongst the four Learning Areas. The uniqueness of the clock is that it has one hand which moves both clockwise and anticlockwise indicating the interrelation is both ways.

The Curriculum Clock also indicates:

-time allocation to each Learning Area

-interrelationship between the Four Pillars and Learning Areas


THE
CURRICULUM CLOCK
TOWARDS HOLISTIC LEARNING AND
GEARED
RELATED TO LIFE SITUATIONS
EMPHASIS ON CREATIVITY
AND AESTHETIC
DEVELOPMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION
35%
ARTS
EDUCATION
15%
20%
30%
MATHS
LANGUAGE
EQUAL EMPHASIS ON LISTENING
SPEAKING READING WRITING SKILLS
LEARNING
TO
KNOW
LEARNING
TO
DO
LEARNING
TO
LIVE
TOGETHER
LEARNING
TO
BE

Why have the curricular areas been reorganised?

To focus more attention on Aesthetic, Affective and Psychomotor Aspects of Child's personality

Though the current scheme of studies comprises six learning areas yet in actual practice the total programme of teaching learning continues to concentrate only on three areas i.e. language, mathematics and environmental studies - I & II. Even the MLL document adopted at national level indicates a clear tilt towards cognitive areas only as discussed in chapter I. The affective and psychomotor aspects are not given the importance that is necessary. Since emotional outlet and aesthetic growth through opportunities for creative expression are very important for the development of a balanced personality, *Art Education* continues to be one independent area of study and the allocation of time to this area is proposed to be raised to 15% from existing 10% .

To provide opportunities for Holistic Learning

To relate the learning to daily life

We are all aware that children at the primary stage of education perceive the broader `whole' rather than `parts' of objects and happenings around. The practice of teaching different subjects as independent subjects does not take into account this basic ability of children which leads to a number of learning problems. Moreover the interlinkages across the subjects get lost in adopting this subject based approach. The reorganistion of curricular areas especially merging of environmental studies I & II, technology, value education, work-experience ,health and physical education into one subject area is an attempt to provide opportunities for holistic learning so as to ensure that it gets linked with the daily life of the child and thereby enabling the child to apply the knowledge and skills acquired. The area of Environmental Education is centred around the life of human beings, how it is affected by the natural environment, how human beings affect their environment - both natural and social; their faiths and values, health, interests, work ethics etc. Study of all these aspects is directly linked with the four pillars which indicate the basic competencies required for the child in day to day living.

To reduce the curriculum load

The segregated approach of teaching various subject areas prevalent in our school system makes the `subject' as the `central' point rather than the `child'. It has resulted in adding more and more subject related information to the subjects of study. This information many times has no relevance to the life of the child outside the four walls of the school. The segregated approach of teaching subjects also leads to repetition of information in different subjects.

Thus, the approach has led to the overloading of curriculum with information over the years. Non-relevance of this overloaded content has led to the *non-comprehension* load.

The merging of curricular areas such as EVS I & II, health and physical education, and work experience is aimed at reducing the load of curriculum. Also the adoption of Integrated Approach to teaching as and where possible would also help in reducing the curriculum load in terms of management of teacher's and child's time.

To provide opportunities for better time utilisation

As per policy decisions, 200 days in a year have been earmarked as teaching days. At the same time child centred methodology has also been emphasised. This methodology because of its focus on activities and participation of all children is bound to be more time consuming though more enjoyable and effective. Therefore teaching of lesser number of subjects which are interlinked is expected to need lesser time on the part of teachers and they are expected to make better utilisation of the time available with them for teaching learning activities, thus leading to better learning on the part of children.

(Detailed guidelines for designing the course content of each area, development of instructional package, planning teaching learning strategies have been given in part II of this document. The guidelines provide more than enough opportunities for flexibility in developing area specific courses of study which would be more suitable and meaningful for children in different parts of the country)

☞ Level-Wise Planning and Implementation of Curriculum

In the existing school system of primary education there are 4/5 grades each separate from the other. This system does not provide for any flexibility in terms of time available for learning. Keeping in view the differences among children in terms of pace and style of learning, a level wise approach is proposed.

LEVELS ARE :

LEVEL I : Equivalent to Existing Early Childhood Education/ School Readiness Programme and Grades I & II

LEVEL II : Equivalent to Existing Grades III and IV

LEVEL III : Equivalent to Existing Grade V

Please note that levels are associated with years of schooling. Each level (detailed out Area wise in part-II) not only provides for minimum to be attained by each child but also has scope for horizontal extension in the form of enrichment experiences to enhance further (indepth) learning for those who have attained the *minimum* faster than others within a year/level.

What is the rationale for proposing three levels?

The levels are based on the patterns of developmental characteristics of children. Since the characteristics of children between 3-7 years and those between 7 to 11 years differ significantly, the grouping in levels has been done accordingly.

At **level I** i.e. **in the first two years of primary stage, the needs of the children are an extension of those of the pre schoolers** and therefore the approach to teaching learning would also have to be similar to that of Early Childhood Education.

Level II is envisaged as a transitional phase in terms of the development pattern of children from **early childhood to middle childhood stage.** Keeping in mind the varying pace of development in children level II is seen corresponding to the third and fourth years of primary stage.

It also caters to the existing structure of primary stage as in some states it still continues to be of four years duration and level II will provide opportunities for inter state comparability of standards.

Level III is corresponding to fifth year of primary stage. This level is proposed as **a year of consolidation of previous learning and readiness for the upper primary stage.**

The main advantages of level wise organisation of curriculum are :

Caters to each child's pace and style of learning

It is universally accepted that every child is unique and different and has her/his own pace of learning. So far, the school system in our country has not been providing opportunities for children to learn at their own pace and style. Every child is expected to attain what has been earmarked for a grade level rigidly within a school year which is unnatural.

Level wise organisation of curriculum and the expected outcomes would allow for sufficient time to each child to progress at her/his own pace of learning and enjoy a sense of achievement.

Caters to variations in Entry Level Competencies of each child

In our country, variations in entry level competencies are very wide. Many children join grade I without any early childhood education, while many are first generation learners. Moreover the policy decisions to permit entry to grade I at anytime of the year add to the variations in levels of competencies in grade I.

Bringing flexibility in terms of longer duration of a `level' as compared to a `grade' is expected to take care of these variations in children's competency levels.

Helps implementation of non detention policy in its correct perspective.

Non detention policy has been in practice at the primary stage in most parts of our country. The purpose of introducing this policy was to do away with the harmful effects of the system of passing judgment on achievement of children at the end of each school year and detaining some as failures in the same class/grade. While allowing vertical movement of children through grades, the policy assumes flexibility in the pace of learning of children and is supposed to provide learning situations as per needs of individual children.

In actual practice however, the policy gets interpreted as ***automatic promotion*** to the next grade irrespective of the level of attainment and has therefore resulted in doing more harm than good. Disregarding the continuity in child's learning, she/he is expected to start from learning outcomes outlined for the next grade even though s/he may not have achieved the outcomes of the preceding year. We, therefore have cases of children in grade V not even knowing how to read and write. Level wise implementation of curriculum would help interpretation of the non detention policy in its correct perspective.

It would also facilitate adoption of child friendly strategies of teaching learning like Child to Child approach which requires more interaction time.

Ensures Readiness for Schooling

We are all aware that early childhood education lays a strong base for primary education. Extending the scope of level I downward to ECCE is expected to strengthen linkages between ECCE and primary curriculum and sensitise teachers and curriculum developers to the significance of school readiness for a child before formal schooling. It will also ensure **readiness for schooling** for those children who join grade I directly without any ECCE experience.

Adoption of level wise approach for planning and implementing curriculum has a **wide range of implications** for curriculum framers, authors of instructional material, teachers, policy makers, educational administrators and teacher educators.

Some of the **implications** are :

- identification of the learning outcomes along the learning continuum in terms of levels not grades
- identification of appropriate range of activities, relevant content in and across different curricular areas for each level while maintaining the interlinkages between the levels
- development of instructional package and support material in line with the levels and expected learning outcomes
- policy changes for provision of flexibility in time table (daily, weekly and annual)
- correct implementation of non detention policy and its extension, up to the end of primary stage.
- orienting /training teachers to the level wise approach
- developing functional procedures for assessment of child's attainment levels

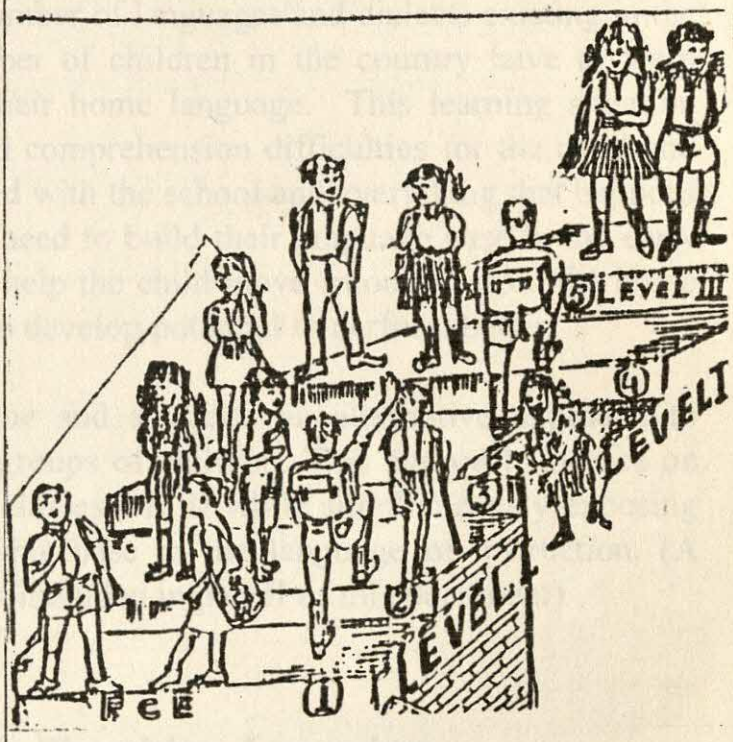
Level wise Approach in Classroom

- *Children will move from grade to grade as in the existing system, but would have the flexibility of continuing with curriculum requirements at their own pace within the years assigned to a level. Thus the gaps that occur in learning between grades would be taken care of.*

- *In situations where some children are ahead of the class and achieve the identified outcomes before the end of academic year, they will not be promoted to the next grade. Instead enrichment experiences are suggested to provide for more in-depth learning.*
  Thus the approach provides enough scope for schools to plan enrichment curricula according to their capacities.

- *In situations where some children are not able to achieve the outcomes of a particular level even within the years provided for the level, special attention and support system would be a required in terms of more time and need related specific materials.*

3 LEVELS Across 5 Grades



Approach to Teaching Language of Instruction where it is not the Mother Tongue

We are all aware that a child in early years learns best through her /his mother tongue. Our policy decisions also provide for mother tongue/regional language to be the medium of instruction. This Curriculum Framework endorses the policy provisions. However, in actual practice every child is not getting opportunities to learn through the mother tongue. The reason is that it is difficult to provide facilities for teaching in the large number of languages and dialects existing in the country. As a result a large number of children in the country have to learn through a language which is not their home language. This learning situation leads to a lot of communication and comprehension difficulties for the child and the child often becomes disenchanted with the school and everything that happens in the school. Therefore there is a need to build their language base in the early years through a bridge approach to help the child move smoothly from the home language to school language and also develop potential to perform better.

This framework addresses this issue and suggests an alternative approach to language teaching to such specific groups of children. This approach focuses on teaching through mother tongue in classes I & II while simultaneously exposing the child to and strengthening her/his base in the language of instruction. (A separate chapter on the area has been included in part II of this document)

Focus on Multigrade Teaching Learning

In our country teachers have to face multigrade teaching situations i.e. handle more than one grade at a time in more than 80% schools. But our system of education is totally geared towards **monograde** teaching whether it is curriculum, or the design of the instructional materials or the kind of teacher training imparted through our teacher training institutes.

The reason for this gap is perhaps our belief in the effectiveness of **monograde** teaching system and our continuous efforts towards reaching the goal of having one teacher for each class. Perhaps that is why **multigrade** teaching situations inspite of being a reality all these years have got no serious attention. Only during the past few years some efforts at individual/institutional level have been made through experiments on a small scale in developing instructional material, orienting teachers in adopting teaching learning strategies to handle multigrade groups.

Proposed level-wise planning and implementation of curriculum, integration of learning areas, and adoption of integrated approach as an alternative approach are possible suggestions , in this framework, towards finding solutions to the problems, being faced in multigrade teaching situations.

Multigrade teaching schools have increased in number during the post independence period due to our constitutional obligation to provide access to elementary education to all children and our inability to provide enough teachers due to various constraints . The situation is also likely to continue for a long period to come.

Keeping in view the specifie needs of these schools the framework suggests that appropriate attention should be paid to facilitate the teacher in impleminting the curriculum. A separate chapter on teaching learning strategies that can be adopted in such schools has been included in this document.

Integrated Approach as possible Alternative to Subject - based teaching

Children at the primary stage, according to their developmental levels, learn meaningfully in a holistic manner. Their observations and understanding of the things and happenings around are based on their totality. Taking this characteristic of children into consideration, ideally the children at primary stage should not be

expected to study different subjects in isolation from each other i.e. the total curriculum should be integrated into one whole.

But, our existing system of education, as we are all aware , provides for subject based teaching. In this approach the **subject** tends to become more significant than the **child.** When the subject becomes all important, inclusion of more and more subject specific information (content) is very natural. But in the process most of the time, the load of the content in terms of concepts and knowledge increases beyond the understanding level of the child and often becomes irrelevant to her/his needs.

Reducing the content load is one of our major concerns today. We know at present our school system is not in a position to implement integrated curriculum immmediately as that needs preparation in terms of development of Integrated Curriculum, preparation of teachers and attitudinal change in them, development of instructional material, and provision of necessary facilities.

Under the circumstances then what can be done?

We can attempt to adopt an Integrated Approach as a possible alternative to subject based teaching learning. But its adoption as an alternative also needs careful planning. Teachers and schools need to be prepared well in advance in terms of orientation and provision of necessary facilities including academic support from supervisory personnel.

The Curriculum Framework has attempted integration of four subject areas in the form of Environmental Education which provides for opportunities to adopt Integrated Approach to teaching even including components of other areas such as language, mathematics and art education as and when the situations allow.

(Separate write ups on Integrated Approach to Teaching and Integrated Curriculum have also been included for reference in Part II)

School Community Interaction

The aim of education is to develop capabilities of children to become effective members of the society. For making the educational programmes relevant to the needs of individuals and the community it becomes necessary to interact with the community to understand their specific needs and incorporate the necessary components in the curriculum and implement it in consultation with them.

The significance of close community school relationship is further enhanced in the context of the 73rd Amendment in the constitution which provides for control on primary education by the local bodies.

This framework provides/suggests broad parameters for a curriculum leaving scope for reflection of local specific content and implementation approaches as per the needs of specific areas. This is possible only if community is closely involved in planning and implementation of curriculum. However, the teacher would be the central figure in the whole process.

How the community can contribute to the effective implementation of curriculum by teacher has been detailed out in chapter 7.

Flexibility in content and approaches to teaching-learning process :

Inspite of are constitutional provision for universal elementary education and varied efforts to attain the targets, even today a large percentage of children in age group of 6-11 years are out-of-school. They have either not joined the school at all or dropped out before completing the primary stage of education.

In view of their maturity level in terms of age (8/9-11 years) varied experiencies in handling work situations, their social background, the framework suggests that

necessary inputs in terms of contextually relevant content and approaches to teaching-learning should be planned as and when necessary.

The possibility of using art, sports, music etc. as entry point areas and building the curriculam around them could be expored as a way of attracting them into the programme.

WHAT NEEDS EMPHASIS ?

There are certain aspects, that were included in the previous framework (1988) which did not receive the attention to the extent and degree required. This frame work reemphasises the importance of these aspects and the need to interpret and implement them in their correct perspective.

☞ Linkages between ECE and Primary

The realisation of positive effects of early childhood education on strengthening the primary education is not new. Its significance had been highlighted even in the pre independence period when Sargent Commission in 1944 recommended that primary education must be preceded by pre primary education, which was later approved by Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE).

Due to various constraints this stage of education could not get enough attention but during the past one decade a vast network in the form of Integrated Child Development Scheme has been established to provide Early Childhood Care and Education. Even privately managed institutions in large numbers have sprung up in the area of Early Childhood Education (ECE).

But unfortunately ECE is, by and large, interpreted as downward extension of primary education instead of a readiness stage for formal schooling. It has lead to emphasis on teaching of 3 R's at this stage which is resulting in pressures on children which are harmful for their development.

This framework reemphasises that linkages between ECE and primary education should be strengthened by making ECE as a strong base to prepare children for formal primary education and extending the playway approach to primary stage to make it more joyful and relevant. In situations where children come into primary without the ECE experience there is need to ensure development and implementation of school readiness programme as a part of the curriculum.

☞ Minimum Levels of Learning and their Place in the Curriculum

As discussed in chapter one during the past few years the concept of minimum levels of learning has been interpreted and implemented in a very narrow sense and this interpretation has ultimately percolated right down to the level of classroom activities.

Let us try to understand what MLLs are and what they are NOT

WHAT MLLs ARE :	WHAT MLLs ARE NOT:
• MLLs are indicators of the progress of the child and should be used as tools for monitoring her/his progress. • MLLs give a broad direction for teaching learning in terms of ensuring the outcomes • MLLs focus on outcome based teaching rather than syllabus based teaching	• MLLs are not an approach to teaching learning • MLLs are not the overall goals of the primary education curriculum • MLLs are not to be transacted in a linear way • MLLs are not the only basis for development of instructional material • MLLs are not indicative of one to one relationship with activities/lessons in a textbook

Hence MLL can be defined as **a set of learning outcomes which are to be used as indicators for monitoring progress of children and which must be attained by each child so long as flexibility in pace and style of learning is provided**. However for the attainment of these, provision of appropriate learning conditions for children has to be ensured.

Please note that MLLs are not `Be All and End All' of primary education. They only provide broad directions but do not define the limits of the curriculum and the related activities.

REMEMBER

- *Any activity/lesson can cater to attainment of any number of minimum learning outcome (LOs)*
- *Every learning outcome needs more than one activity/experience, to be attained*
- *Attainment of any LO(s) can be ensured if essentials conditions are available*
- *Every child learns at her/his own pace and therefore, mastery learning by each child cannot be expected at the same time*
- *The concept of mastery learning cannot be applicable to all aspects of learning such as developing attitudes or acquiring values. Therefore the idea of 80x80 level cannot be applicable all the time to all the children*
- *Attainment of LOs by each child need flexibility in learning time*
- *Attainment of LOs cannot be evaluated in isolation.*

☞ Concept of Evaluation

In the context of the definition of Minimum Levels of Learning, evaluation has a very significant role as a tool for teaching and learning. It is expected to guide the teacher in his/her teaching learning plans after identifying the level where each child is in different aspects of learning, diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses of each child at different steps of learning and planning remedial/enrichment teaching learning accordingly.

We are all aware that every aspect of child's development /learning cannot be evaluated through planned tests at different intervals and every capability cannot be categorized and judged at `mastery level'.

Keeping in view the above facts, the earlier framework had recommended the concept of continuous and comprehensive evaluation. But due to our continued dependence on end results in terms of child's position in annual/terminal examinations the concept of continuous evaluation in practice has added to the pressures on child of preparation for increased number of `examinations' spread over the year. The process has further led to the neglect of development of equally important aspects of child's personality categorized as affective and psychomotor domains. This framework reemphasises the need to adopt and implement continuous and comprehensive evaluation in its right perspective as discussed in chapter 5. Its adoption in the right sense needs to be preceded by attitudinal change in all concerned i.e. community, administrators, teachers.

☞ Child Centred Approach

Child centred approach in our country is as old as the beginning of formal education in the ancient period. Over the centuries with changes in the focus of objectives of curriculum, the approach gradually shifted to teacher centred where `teaching' becomes more important rather than learning. The situation continues to be the same even today in most of the schools. As discussed in chapter I the

adoption of competency based teaching under MLL Implementation programme in our country has lead to a very narrow perspective of primary education . This approach focuses only on developing the cognitive aspects of child's personality ignoring the other aspects . We all know that for an all round development of the child affective and psychomotor aspects are equally important. Every child being different and unique meeting his or her needs requires different methods/ways which can be met through the adoption of a child cenred approach.

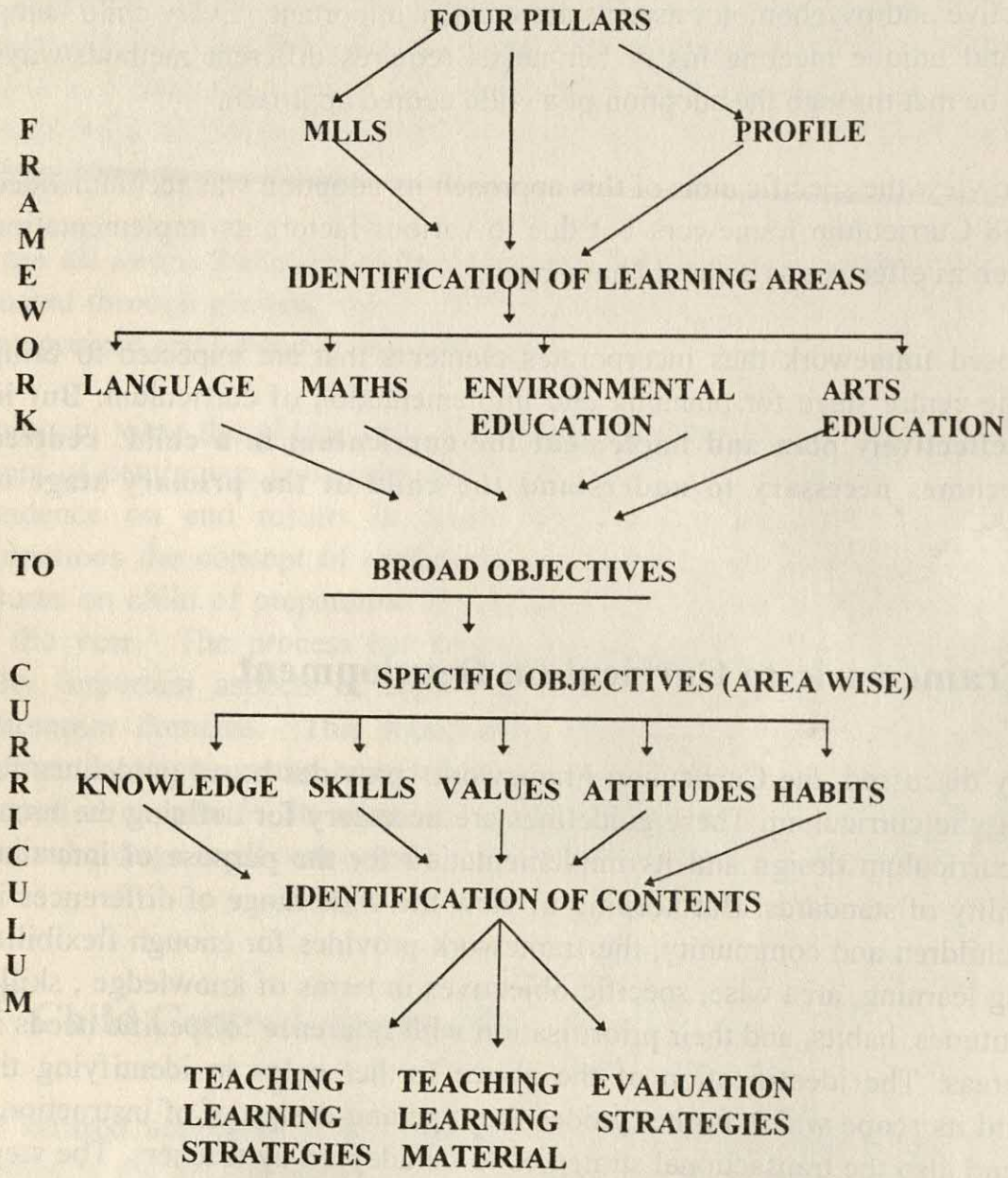
Keeping in view the specific aims of this approach its adoption was recommended in the 1988 Curriculum framework but due to various factors its implementation has not been as effective as it should have been.

The proposed framework thus incorporates elements that are expected to bring child to the centre stage for planning and implementation of curriculum. **But in order to effectively plan and implement the curriculum in a child centred way it becomes necessary to understand the child at the primary stage of education.**

From Framework to Curriculum Development

As already discussed, the Curriculum Framework provides broad guidelines for developing the curriculum. These guidelines are necessary for defining the broad base for curriculum design and its implementation for the purpose of interstate comparability of standards. But keeping in view the wide range of differences in needs of children and community, the framework provides for enough flexibility in defining learning, area wise, specific objectives in terms of knowledge , skills, values, attitudes, habits, and their prioritisation with reference to specific needs in specific areas. The identification of the above further helps in identifying the content and its scope which further guides the type and design of of instructional material and also the transactional strategies to be adopted by teachers. The steps involved in the development of curriculum in the light of the curriculum frame - work are highlighted in the model on the next page.

FROM FRAMEWORK TO CURRICULUM



Chapter 4

Understanding the Child

UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD

In the last chapter we had discussed that primary education curriculum must be planned keeping the 'child' in focus since it is the 'child' for whom the curriculum is to be prepared, and the one who we expect will ultimately benefit from it. . In order to focus on the 'child' it therefore becomes very necessary to first get to know what children are really like at the primary stage. What are their needs and interests? What all are they able to do and what are the many things they may not like to do or may not yet be able to do? Answers to questions like these would help us keep the primary level children's characteristics in mind while planning the curriculum.

In this chapter we will try to find some of these answers through the focus on the following questions :

- ✓ What is the child like?
- ✓ How do children learn?
- ✓ What leads to differences among children?
- ✓ Who are the children with Special Educational Needs?

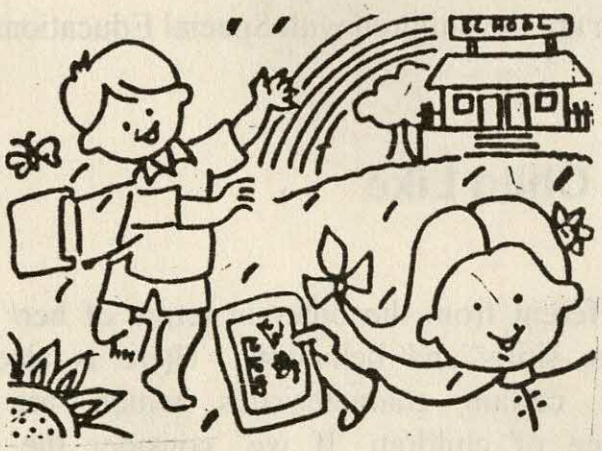
What is the Child Like

Each child is different from the other in terms of her/ his likes, dislikes, interests, abilities, skills and behaviour. There is also a set pattern of development and certain characteristics which are common to each specific age range of children. If we consider the age span covering the early childhood and primary grades, i.e 3 - 11 years , these years or age ranges can be divided into two main stages of development viz.,

STAGE	AGE RANGE	GRADES	LEVEL
1	Approx. 3-7 years	ECE, 1& 2	I
2	Approx 7-11 Years	3, 4 & 5	II & III

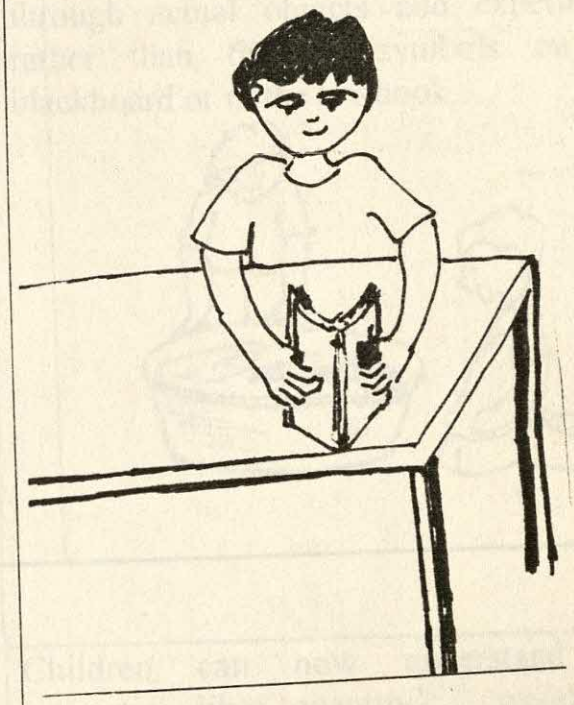
If we happen to visit a school having preschool and primary classes and observe the children there, we will definitely be able to see for ourselves a lot of difference between the 3 -7 year olds and the 7 -11 year olds in terms of their behaviour and their reactions to different situations. Within each of these two stages however, while individual differences exists there will also be many commonalties.

Let us see what children , on an average, are like in each of these two stages.



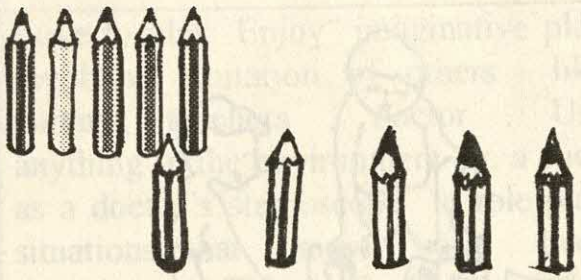
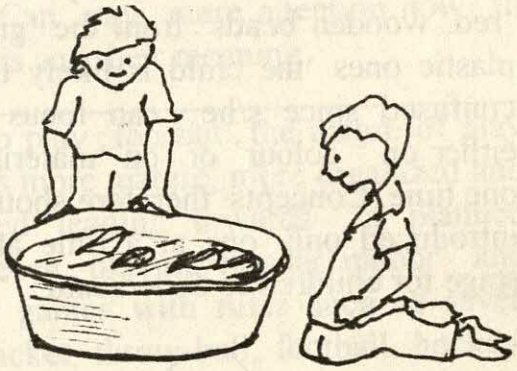
PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

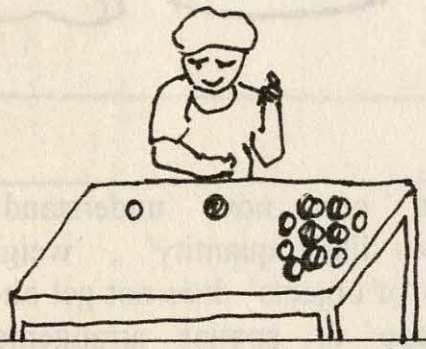
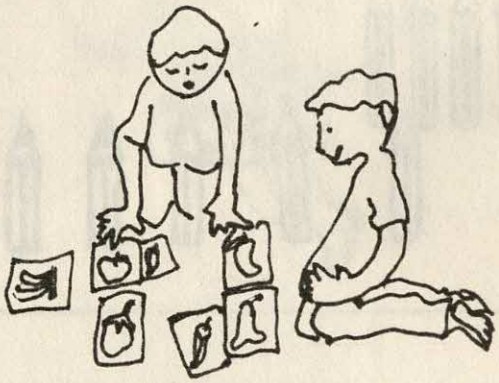
PHYSICAL

STAGE 1 (3-7year old's)	STAGE 2 (7-11 year old's)
Very active and energetic. Bones and muscles are still developing. Cannot therefore sit still for more than10-15 minutes. Need variety of activities involving frequent change of body position eg. indoor/outdoor activity, active / quiet activity. 	Continues to be energetic but can now stay in the same position for a longer time. 
Gross movements involving large areas of body are still developing. Control of finer muscles of hand , wrist , fingers , eye- hand coordination are also still developing .	Control of muscles of arms, shoulders, wrists , eye- hand coordination improves rapidly.

Need opportunities therefore for play and activities involving running, jumping, balancing, etc for larger muscles and drawing, coloring, clay work , painting etc. to develop eye-hand coordination.	Can write, draw, paint , sew, more skillfully. Can play games involving better body control like fast running, jumping, balancing, cycling, skipping. Can dance showing better control of larger and finer body movements. Love to show off their new skills!

COGNITIVE

Attention span is short , ranging from 7 to 15 minutes, that too depending on how interested the child is in the activity.	Attention span becomes longer and the child can now not only sit but also concentrate for a longer time now.
Thinking is controlled by the child's own perceptions---in other words, the child thinks as s/he sees. For example, if 5 matchsticks are placed far apart and another 5 matchsticks are placed close together the child at this stage is likely to say, the ones placed apart are more. They appear more to him/her simply because they cover a larger area. 	Ability to think and reason logically develops but is still limited to concrete situations. Abstract thinking is still difficult. For example, mathematics concepts are understood well if introduced through actual objects and experiences rather than through symbols on the blackboard or in the textbook.. 
Children at this stage, may have difficulty in understanding that things can be done, undone and then again redone. In other words, the child is still in the process of developing the ability to 'conserve'.	Children can now understand that properties like 'quantity' , `weight' or `number of objects' does not get altered if the shape or spatial arrangement is changed.
For example, if you show a round ball of clay to a child at this stage, and then	In the example of 5 matchsticks given alongside, the child at this stage can

stretch it into a long shape the child may not be able to realize fully that the quantity of clay is the same, only the shape has changed. This limitation makes it difficult for children at this stage to understand basic mathematical and science concepts properly.	confidently tell that the number remains the same even if one arrangement covers a larger area. In other words the child now has the ability to conserve. This is an important development which equips children to learn mental operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The children can now understand that these processes are 'reversible' i. e. subtraction and addition are opposite or reverse of each other.
Are able to concentrate on only one aspect of an object at a time.For example , if a child is given a bowl full of beads and asked to separate the 'red, wooden beads' from the 'green , plastic ones 'the child is likely to get confused since s/he can focus only either on ' colour' or on 'material' at one time. Concepts therefore should be introduced only one at a time at this stage for children to understand. 	Can handle more than one concept at a time. Can now classify objects in many ways on the basis of different properties.eg. colour, shape, size, texture, function etc. 
Children can see things from only their own point of view and not from other's point of view. This is because children as yet have only limited knowledge and exposure to other people and their experiences. Notice a child at this stage when a	By this stage children develop the capacity to see other's point of view and respond to it appropriately. Children are also able to move from personal experiences to general principles i. e. the child can relate his/her own experience meaningfully to a situation encountered or being discussed. This development is

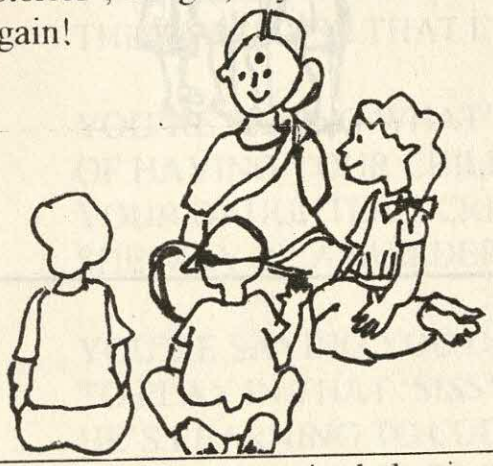
story is being told. More often than not s/he will keep on interrupting with unrelated comments and will share irrelevant experiences!	a major step forward which helps the children analyse, understand and see logical relationships.
Pick up languages spoken around them very fast and can learn more than one language at a time. Acquire vocabulary very steadily and there is a distinct shift from actions to words. However, child need a lot of opportunities to speak with others and listen to good language.	Develop important language skills like listening, speaking , reading and writing with understanding provided right opportunities, experiences and encouragement are available.
Respond spontaneously to music , rhyme, rhythm. No wonder numbers and alphabets taught through poems, songs are learnt faster!	Continue to respond spontaneously to music and rhythm. Enjoy songs and poems. Can pay more attention now to the words and their meaning.
Love to play .Enjoy imaginative play involving imitation of others like parents, teachers , doctor . Use anything in the environment eg. a stick as a doctor's stethoscope to role play situations that may have been experienced. This kind of play helps the child understand social roles and relationships. Play also helps the child resolve negative feelings or tensions and provides emotional release.	Love to play too but the nature of play becomes more mature, more organized and structured leading towards a planned outcome eg. playing regular indoor and outdoor games with rules such as seven tiles, cricket, throw-ball, football, hockey, kho-kho, marbles, *gittis*, snakes and ladders, ludo etc.

Are curious and want to know the 'how', 'why' and 'what' of everything. Ask a lot of questions which if not answered is likely to diminish the curiosity.	Continue to be curious unless discouraged at the earlier stage. Need a stimulating environment to nurture the curiosity.
Have a natural tendency to explore their surroundings and discover properties, patterns and relationships in the environment through trial and error.	Continue to enjoy exploring the environment. Can now experiment and solve simple problems using logical skills and feel a sense of achievement / competence in doing so.
Need to be guided by the teacher in conduct of activities.	Can successfully plan and organize activities leading to specific outcomes, along with other children, with only a little guidance from the teacher.

SOCIO-EMOTIONAL

Like playing with toys, simple puzzles, blocks, things in the immediate environment. Enjoy songs, stories , rhymes, puppet- play, playing with masks etc. Like animal stories, fun stories, stories/ rhymes with loud humour like somebody slipping and falling on a banana skin(!)and so on.

Enjoy repetition and loves to hear the same stories , songs , rhymes over and over again!



Like playing with more complex toys which can be dismantled and reconstructed. Like making their own toys. Enjoy stories but more of those with adventure. Like acting out dramas on their own. Enjoy humour but more with words, eg funny rhymes and limericks, funny jokes , nonsense rhymes etc. Enjoy variety in stories and songs at this stage

Are more spontaneous in behaviour and react according to feeling. Respond instantly to love, praise or criticism. Physical reassurance by way of patting, touching, holding the hand gives them a sense of security and confidence

Are more conscious of reacting, responding in socially desirable ways. Still crave for attention and approval but of a more verbal nature. Get embarrassed with any physical display of feeling. Seek teacher's approval all the while and look upto her/him as a role model.

While initially children tend to play alone or in pairs, gradually they become more interested in playing in small groups. Boys and girls play together.

Friends become very important at this stage. However, a gender bias comes in now so that we see boys wanting to be with boys and girls with girls! One should not be surprised to find a boy not even wanting to touch a girl's belongings ,or a girl saying "I do not like boys; they are my classmates -not friends!"

PLAY TODAY ?

YOU SAY YOU LOVE YOUR CHILDREN
AND ARE CONCERNED THEY LEARN TODAY ?
SO AM I..... THAT'S WHY I AM PROVIDING
A VARIETY OF KINDS OF PLAY

YOU'RE ASKING ME THE VALUE
OF BLOCKS AND OTHER SUCH PLAY ?
YOUR CHILDREN ARE SOLVING PROBLEMS
THEY WILL USE THAT EVERYDAY.

YOU'RE ASKING WHAT'S THE VALUE
OF HAVING YOUR CHILDREN PLAY ?
YOUR DAUGHTER'S CREATING A TOWER;
SHE MAY BE A BUILDER SOME DAY

YOU'RE SAYING YOU DON'T WANT YOUR SON
TO PLAY IN THAT 'SISSY' WAY ?
HE'S LEARNING TO CUDDLE A DOLL
HE MAY BE A FATHER SOME DAY

YOU'RE QUESTIONING THE ACTIVITY CENTRES ?
THEY JUST LOOK LIKE USELESS PLAY ?
YOUR CHILDREN ARE MAKING CHOICES;
THEY'LL BE ON THEIR OWN SOME DAY.

YOU'RE WORRIED YOUR CHILDREN AREN'T
LEARNING
AND LATER THEY'LL HAVE TO PAY ?
THEY'RE LEARNING A PATTERN FOR LEARNING
FOR THEY'LL BE LEARNERS ALWAYS

- LELLA PAGG

The Child And Play

Play is something that children are just born to do. Play is so much fun for children . It is often believed that if a child stops eating it is not so much a matter of anxiety as when a child stops playing. Is the play the child indulges in only 'fun' for the child or does it also help the child develop and learn better?

If we take a serious look at the way children play and the content of their play we will find that play is really the fundamental building block of children's learning. It contributes to each of the four pillars of learning to know, learning to do , learning to live together and learning to be !

Play helps children

- Learn to cooperate and share with others and wait for their turn.
- Learn to make friends and keep them.
- Learn to explore, experiment and make their own discoveries.
- Learn to use their own hands and develop their body co-ordination. Get opportunities to practice their language skills.
- Learn to accept both success and failures in a positive way.
- Get opportunities to be creative and make use of their imagination.
- Find a way to give vent to their emotions and resolve their little anxieties. Be self-confident and self-reliant.

Play is thus not only a basic need of every child but also a basic right!

How do Children Learn ?

While children at different stages have different needs, abilities and interests which need to be kept in mind while planning learning experiences for them , it is also important to know how children actually learn. It becomes necessary also in view of the fact that, as we all know, there is a wide gap between what is 'taught' by the teacher and what is actually 'learned' by the children. Understanding how they learn will help reduce this gap and enhance children's learning. Let us consider what are the ways in which children learn better:

- Children come to school not as an empty slate but with a fund of experiences already with her/ him. This may vary from child to child both in terms of quantity and quality. The learning experiences planned must take these into account. Also, their diverse experiences and knowledge levels at the time of coming into school, must be acknowledged and respected to give them confidence and a sense of self esteem.
- Children's learning is not limited to the school. It is a continuous process taking place all the time and everywhere, at home, in the class and even on the playground.
- Children learn not only from the teacher but also from interacting with other children and materials and therefore need opportunities for this interaction.
- Children learn through their senses. Opportunities for sensory stimulation (smell, touch, taste, hearing and vision) and activities involving more than one sense will help children learn better.

❖ Children learn at their own pace. All children cannot be expected to learn at a uniform speed. Flexibility is therefore very important in providing learning time as well as in setting expectations from children.

❖ Children learn in a holistic way and not in a segmented or compartmentalized way. Learning would therefore be more meaningful for a child through an integrated approach rather than through teaching of each subject separately.

❖ Children do not learn in a linear way. They learn instead in a spiral way. For example, children may be taught addition of single digit numbers in grade 1 after having learnt numbers. But their learning would be better if they are given the opportunity to come back to these concepts and skills again in the later grades along with the new learning so that this learning gets consolidated.

❖ Children's learning proceeds from concrete to abstract, from familiar to unfamiliar and from specific to general. Learning experiences for children therefore need to be planned keeping these principles in mind.

❖ Children need to experience success more often than failure to encourage them to work hard and achieve. It is important, therefore , to plan tasks for them which provide a challenge but are well within the limits of their abilities.

❖ Children learn through imitation. That is how they pick up good/ bad habits and values depending on what they see around them. They therefore need good role models to learn from, both at home and school.

❖ Children differ in the way they think and reason out problems. For example, some children are by nature more reflective i.e. they think a great deal before giving the answer or deciding on a solution. Others are more impulsive and respond immediately. We cannot therefore expect every child to behave or respond in the same way in a particular situation.

❖ Children also learn better if they are encouraged and reinforced. Not only do they learn better but also get motivated to learn more and still more, if they receive encouragement, appreciation and opportunities.

❖ Children learn easily when the content is interesting, captivating, and relevant to the child's immediate environment.

❖ Children's learning is more effective if the teaching-learning process is joyful and activity – based and allows for active participation and thinking at their level.

REMEMBER: There is no **"one right way"** through which children learn. Teachers need to experiment and try alternatives to see what is effective in which situation..

❖ Children learn in many different ways. Some learn better through listening, some through music or through visuals.

Can children be intelligent in different ways?

Recent research has shown *that intelligence need not be only of the 'academic' kind as it, traditionally believed There can be as many as seven different kinds of 'intelligence' such as*

Musical intelligence

Interpersonal intelligence

Kinesthetic intelligence

Numerical intelligence

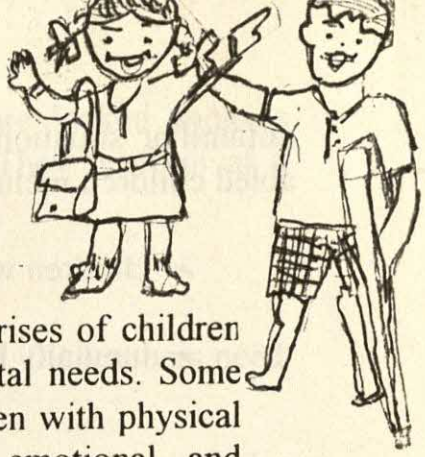
Linguistic intelligence

Spatial intelligence

Intrapersonal intelligence

Every child may have his own aptitude and would perform very well if given the option and opportunity to learn and respond in his her way. Teachers therefore need to provide a variety of activities opportunities in the class so that every child has equal chances of getting and giving his/her best

Who are the Children with Special Needs?



If we visit any class in a school we will find that it comprises of children with varying backgrounds and with different developmental needs. Some children have **special learning needs**. These include children with physical disabilities, the mentally handicapped, children with emotional and behavioral disorders and others with language problems. These may also include children from special social groups like the tribals, the minorities and children from socio-economically disadvantaged environments who may face problems related to learning and adjustment in the school. It is important to recognize these needs in the children and make efforts to address them to the extent possible.

Children with Behavioural Disorders

The number of children experiencing behavioural problems is fast increasing due to various reasons related to day to day conflicts and pressures. The disorders that afflict children are as numerous as they are diverse. Behaviour disorders may range from relatively simple depressions or fears to much more serious and longer lasting patterns of behaviour such as acute withdrawal or shyness, excessive anxiety or hyperactivity. Children in early phase of Stage 1 often show emotional outbursts in the form of temper tantrums, or aggressiveness which can be very normal for that age . But most children tend to grow out of it . Continuation of behaviours like thumb-sucking, biting nails, nightmares, bed-wetting, uncontrolled aggressiveness are all symptoms of more lasting emotional problems in children and require special attention. There is need to locate the source of the problem which may lie either in the home of the child or in the school and work towards its solution.

Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities or what is now referred to as different abilities, are those who have one or more handicap and are therefore unable to cope with the pressures of normal life. These children may face difficulties and

unfamiliar situations in a normal primary school setting. These differently abled children include

- children with physical disabilities (both orthopedic and sensory)
- mentally handicapped children

To ensure a positive experience for these children that will contribute to their total development, it is necessary to build on the individual child's existing knowledge and skills. Rather than be placed in a segregated setting it is an advantage for these children to have their learning and social needs met in regular school settings. Including these children in a regular school programme would not only help these children develop a sense of acceptance and belonging but also help develop a positive attitude towards them in normal children. This would promote the concept of learning together while also enable the differently abled child to realize her/his full potential.
At the same time, these children would need special education in keeping with their specific needs.

Children with Learning Disabilities

It is often observed that many children who have intelligence scores in the normal range when tested, have trouble learning some specific skills in school. Such children are described as having .a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Some have difficulty with numbers, but by far the largest group are children who have trouble learning to read. Perceptual problems are found to be the root cause of many learning disabilities. Typically, the child is not able to properly organize and interpret various types is of sensory stimuli or reading/ number material that s/he encounters.. For example , if a child has Dyslexia - a disorder that affects one's reading ability , writing and spelling skills as well as memory capacities- the child is likely to 'see' alphabets in reverse form such as, *b* read as *d* etc.

Unfortunately children who have a learning disability are looked upon as intellectually incompetent when they need not be so. They perform at a lower level because of their impairment.

Since the reasons for SLD are varied and not very obvious, the teachers need to be aware of the problem and handle it appropriately.

The Gifted Child

A' gifted child is one who by virtue of her/his outstanding ability is capable of higher performance. Any classification of children with special needs cannot be complete without saying a word or two about this group of children as well. These children are just as special as the mentally handicapped since they place special demands on both parents and the school system.

While it is often believed that gifted children are better adjusted in life this is not necessarily so. Not every gifted child is self-confident , independent and popular . They also need to be helped to nurture their special abilities in an appropriate environment and given tasks suited to their ability and giftedness. At the same time they also need help in not letting their giftedness come in the way of their forming healthy, happy relationships with others ,including their peer group.

How can We Help these Children?

As parents and teachers our main concern should be to help minimize the resulting handicap/ behavioural disorders, and make it possible for the child to function as normally as possible.

What can we do?

At the ***Individual Level*** (at home as parents)

- Individual therapy or training of the child depending on her/his special needs

- For behavioural problems , parents need to examine the home environment as well as the pattern of discipline they apply to their children

- For handicapped children parents need to accept the child emotionally and learn how to stimulate and play with the child

At the school Level

The school system has a crucial role to play in responding to the needs of the child with special needs. The emphasis today is on mainstreaming and inclusion of these children in regular programmes.

What does mainstreaming really mean?

- It does not mean that every child with special needs must be full time in a regular classroom . It does mean that many children who had previously been taught in special segregated classes will now be spending part or all of their school hours in a regular classroom depending on their specific situation.

- The basic rule is that each child should be assigned to the least restrictive environment s/he can handle.

- For children whose degree of disability does not allow for any integration , the alternative would be some sort of a special school.

Whether the child with special needs is to be mainstreamed or put in a special school depends , to a great extent, on the type and degree of

handicap. Teachers and parents need special orientation in this area to enable them to effectively educate and care for these children.

In this chapter we have tried to take a look at the children who we expect will come into the primary schools, the children for whom we are planning the curriculum and tried to understand their needs, charateristics and interests at the different levels of the primary stage. Let us now move on to the next step of outlining what should be the methods and materials that would help children learn better at this stage keeping in mind what we understand the child to be like in these years.

Chapter 5

Making Teaching Child Centred

Chapter 5

Making Teaching Child Centred

A Visit to Two Classrooms !

Teacher Centered Classroom	Child Centered Classroom
• Teacher talks most of the time and children listen .	• Children work and talk in low tones in groups/ pairs and to the teacher - to share information, clarify ideas .
• Children sit in rows one after another and the teacher sits facing the class.	• Children sit either in a semi- circle or in groups, in learning corners.
• Only teaching learning material visible is a blackboard and textbooks in front of the children.	• There are a variety of materials, learning aids, workbooks all around being used by children.
• Display consists of alphabet and number charts only.	• Attractive display of pictures, concrete materials, children's work , alphabet and number charts etc. in colourful arrangement.
• Periods are fixed of 30 to 40 minutes each with children keenly awaiting the bell !	• A more open time table, is followed with larger blocks of time. Children look involved in work and do not get easily distracted.
• Each subject is taught separately with no linkages established among subjects.	• The curricular areas are linked by the teacher for holistic learning.
• Teacher goes out of class and there is chaos.	• Teacher goes out of class and children do not even realize it as they continue to work.
• Teacher teaches for eg. about `plants' straight from the textbook without exposing children to *real plants*.	• Teacher teaches `plants' through giving children opportunity for actual observation.
• Teacher looks tired and harassed and children look bored.	• Teacher and children together look relaxed.

MAKING TEACHING CHILD-CENTERED

In the last chapter we discussed what children are like at the primary stage. If we want children to learn and develop to their full potential, it becomes important to plan the teaching- learning in the classroom in ways that match their needs, characteristics, styles of learning . In other words , we must make our teaching more child-centered. The National Policy on Education (1986/92) has also emphasized the need to create a joyful learning environment for children and adopt a child- centered and activity based process of learning at the primary stage. Since then many programmes have been undertaken in this area. However, often the entire concept of child-centered, activity-based approach has been misunderstood, as is evident in many cases, from the kind of classroom practices it has encouraged.

In this chapter we will try to address three important questions in this regard viz.:

- what is child-centered , activity-based approach?
- why is it necessary?
- how should it be practised?

WHAT IS CHILD -CENTERED, ACTIVITY-BASED APPROACH?

Child centered, activity- based approach means an approach to classroom teaching which is specifically based on the needs, abilities, developmental level, interests and social context of the children for whom it is planned. It places an emphasis on 'learning by doing', 'experiencing' and 'active participation' on the part of the child. The methodology employed in this approach is largely

based on creating a learning environment for the child through planned activities which are joyful and involve active thinking / learning from the child. The role of the teacher is essentially that of a facilitator.

The child- centered approach is thus largely guided by **two basic principles** or assumptions:

- Children create their own knowledge from their experiences and interactions with the world around them

- Teachers foster children's learning and development best by building on the interests , needs, styles of learning and strengths of the children in the class.

In a child-centered classroom :

- the child and not the teacher is the focus of the entire process of teaching-learning.
- the child is not a passive but an active participant in the classroom process
- the child gets maximum opportunities for interaction with:

* other children in the class,
* with the teacher and
* with a variety of teaching-learning material

- the curriculum and the instructional materials serve as a means to foster the child's all round development and are not ends in themselves
- the goal of teaching-learning is not merely helping children acquire knowledge but promoting all round development of personality
- activities planned by teachers and carried out by children become the medium of learning for the child rather than only the text-books .

- evaluation of the child's attainment is done as an important part of the learning cycle to ensure child's progress and not as a means of passing judgment on the child's abilities
- the teacher's aim while teaching is not so much to cover the syllabus but to ensure that all children in the class are learning
- the environment in the class is warm, joyful, encouraging in which children feel secure and confident and participate freely and without any fear
- variety of activities / opportunities are available in the classroom which enable each child to learn at her/his own pace and in tune with her/ his own learning style
- the teacher is a friend and a facilitator for the children and allows the centre of action to shift in the class from herself /himself to the children

WHY IS CHILD- CENTERED APPROACH NECESSARY?

Let us for a moment imagine that we are in a typical primary classroom while the class is going on. What are we likely to see happening? We would possibly see a teacher standing at the blackboard, chalk in hand, either explaining something drawn/written or getting the children to read one by one from the textbook. Or s/he may be writing something on the blackboard and asking the children to copy on their slates or note-books. If it is a multi-grade situation, chances are that the teacher may have given one grade some written work while s/he may be teaching the other grade from the text-book. While in one case children would be just passively listening ,in the other two cases they may be busy writing or reading mechanically from the book. In all these situations one can observe that there is very little 'active learning' taking place in the case of most children . If we talk to the teacher she would probably say that she is sincerely working towards completing the syllabus and that is what

every teacher and her supervisors would want her to do! Where then is the problem?

The problem is that in all such classroom ,and these are the rule and not the exceptions, the classroom situation is very **teacher- centered i.e. the control over time, pace and nature of the classroom activities is totally in the hands of the teacher.** The teacher's main aim is to complete the lesson/ syllabus and there is little focus on how many children have really learnt. Because when a teacher gives a lesson it does not necessarily mean all children have learnt!

Every class consists of three broad categories of children - the fast learners, the average and the comparatively slower learners. The majority are found in the average group. Therefore it has been observed that when teachers teach, as described above only about one-third of the children who are the fast learners are really able to keep pace with the teacher to some extent. Of the others, some are able to understand partially and a few do not understand at all. Over a period of time , as the teacher proceeds from lesson to lesson, the gap in children's learning becomes wider and still wider to the extent that many begin to suffer from what is known as the **'load of non-comprehension'**. Gradually , since the child can no longer keep pace, this may well lead to a growing disinterest in schooling and the child may even drop out of the system.

One of the major reasons for this wide gap between what the teacher has '*taught*' and what the children have '*learnt*' is that in such a classroom the child is not an active participant but merely a passive recipient in the teaching-learning process. The teacher speaks and the children listen! This approach does not match with the way in which children learn. The children are at a stage of development when they need to experience, act , do and thus learn . Also, different children ,as we discussed in Chapter 4 , learn in different ways and at different paces. The teacher- centered approach as described above, does not provide for any of this and therefore there is a mis-match between the learner and the learning process!

The child- centered approach , on the contrary, is better matched to the needs of children and ensures not only easier, better and more lasting and joyful learning but also caters to the all round development of the child's personality.

Many teachers, parents and other personnel working in the area of education often believe that a child- centered approach to teaching- learning will not provide the structure needed for rigorous , intensive and specific learning to take place as desired. Research has shown the opposite to be true. Perhaps because learning and ability are so closely tied to emotions , interests and feelings of competence in children , more child- centered classrooms have been found to produce children whose academic abilities were superior to the abilities of children who attend more traditional classrooms.

Unlike the teacher-centered approach or the more 'skill - focussed' competency based teaching , the child- centered approach provides scope for a range of experiences for children which would help to lay the foundation for all the four pillars of learning i.e.

- *Learning to know*
- *Learning to do*
- *Learning to live together*
- *Learning to be*

The question we need to address now, at this point, is - how should a child-centered , activity based programme be actually planned and carried out in the classroom in a way that ensures achievement of the outcomes we are expecting from it ?

HOW SHOULD CHILD-CENTERED APPROACH BE PRACTISED?

Let us recall what are the different components of any teaching -learning situation. The process of teaching- learning is largely governed by:

i) The Child

ii) Teaching- learning Process

iii) The Teacher

In order to understand how child- centered education is to be practised, let us consider this approach in the context of each of these components.

The Child

In Chapter 4 we have already discussed the needs and characteristics of children at the primary stage . It is important to recall at this point again that the needs and characteristics of the younger children (Stage 1) are in many ways different to those of the older children (Stage 2) The implication of this is that the teaching- learning process must be planned in ways that are in tune with these differences . What may be a very enjoyable learning activity for the younger child may not be enjoyable or challenging enough for a more mature , older child. *For example, a child at Level 1 stage may enjoy learning about animals and their sounds through dramatization , using masks. A child at Level 2 or 3 may consider this 'childish' and may learn much better through preparing a ' project' on Animals along with a group of friends!*

WHAT IS AN ACTIVITY ?

Many people believe an 'ACTIVITY ' is a way of learning which involves physical participation of the children in something which is fun for them ! For example dramatization, rhymes and songs , puppet play , fun games and so on. These can certainly all serve as very good learning activities. The risk is that often these get conducted as 'activity for activity's sake' by teachers and therefore, although joyful, may not lead to any learning. It is important to note that a **good activity is one which:**

- involves participation of every child
- leads to 'active thinking' on the part of the children
- may or may not involve physical activity but definitely involves use of mental skills e.g. solving puzzles or writing one's experiences, reading a book or referring to a dictionary are also activities
- is planned to be challenging enough for children so as to help them practice and apply thier skills and knowledge in a variety of ways, across many situations
- enables children to learn in a joyful and interesting way

REMEMBER : What may be a good activity for Level 1 may not be appropriate for Level 2 and vice versa.

We must also keep in mind the different characteristics of children's learning which are common to both stages . These have also been discussed in some detail in Chapter 4. Keeping in mind , for example, that children can be intelligent in many different ways, or that they learn in many different ways becomes an important consideration for the teacher who needs to therefore plan a variety of experiences or activities for the children. Similarly, the fact

that children learn in a spiral and not in a linear way makes it necessary to give opportunities to children, through activities and materials, to come back to or revise concepts already introduced earlier, again and again, for a deeper understanding.

While the characteristics discussed in Chapter 4 are common to most children, the teacher has to also keep in mind the specific group of children she is teaching in terms of their social and cultural background, their immediate environment , the learning and experiences already with them when they come into the class, their language background , and other such aspects which would also determine the kinds of activities / experiences she will plan for them. To this extent, it is believed that every classroom is unique in its character and therefore what may work with one group of children or with one teacher may not necessarily work with another! The importance of developing this sensitivity in teachers cannot therefore be overemphasized.

TEACHING- LEARNING PROCESS

In order to understand how child-centered approach will influence the teaching- learning process in the classroom it is necessary to consider its implications for different aspects of the teaching- learning process. *viz*

⇒ Planning

⇒ Teaching Strategies

⇒ Classroom Organization and Management

⇒ Time Management

⇒ Teaching- Learning Materials

⇒ Assessment

Let us consider each of these one by one.

PLANNING

A child- centered classroom is certainly not a laissez - faire programme without goals or direction where the teacher and children decide on the spur of the moment what to do ! On the contrary, planning is absolutely central to a good child- centered programme. The planning is to be done keeping in mind the following:

- the specific objectives of the curriculum and level- wise expected learning outcomes for the different learning areas
- resources available, both financial and material
- teaching- learning time available
- developmental stage, background and entry level learning of the children to be taught

A good programme requires both long - term and short term planning.

Long term planning means annual planning or planning broadly for the whole year by listing out the learning areas to be covered . These can then be further broken down into **term- wise** and then **month- wise** planning units.

Short term planning is based on these long term plans and requires more detailed plans for the **fortnight** or **week** based on which the **daily** plan is worked out.

The Daily Plan

The daily plan must be worked out keeping in mind some basic principles of planning. The daily schedule must have a *balance* of :

- activities for the different curricular areas in proportion to the ratio of time prescribed for each area.
- large group , small group, paired and individual activities
- outdoor and indoor activities

- active and quiet activities e.g. a circle game for mathematics could be followed by a story listening session
- guided, open-ended or creative activities
- activities for new learning/ revision and continued assessment

Building The Four Pillars Through Child-Centered Approach

Child- centered approach can help build the pillars of :

Learning to know Through activities involving observation, thinking, experimenting, reasoning, problem -solving, reporting, reading etc.

Learning to do Through activities like making children responsible for arranging materials, keeping class clean, doing small errands, cleaning backboard; also learn by doing e.g. keeping record of each other's height, doing simple experiment measuring the class furniture, solving actual problems example dividing themselves into equal groups etc.

Learning to live together Through group activities, sharing of material, waiting for turn, helping each other through peer tutoring, making groups responsible collectively for different class responsibilities , rotation of monitors etc.

Learning to be Through giving children opportunities to feel worthy by getting learning tasks within their capacity and giving positive feedback, thus improving their chances of success over failure; giving opportunity to them to give vent to their creativity; providing a democratic climate for free and confident expression of ideas; opportunities for communication and decision making in simple free play situations for younger children and sessions of brain storming, discussions , project planning etc. for older children; providing good role models within school situation for value inculcation and encouraging desirable behaviour etc.

While planning is essential for a quality programme it is equally important to remember that this planning has to be *flexible* and should allow for changes based on the immediate learning situation. For an effective child-centered programme it is also better to have *one teacher per class* which is generally the pattern in most urban government schools, other than what are known as multigrade schools (discussed separately). The system of subject teachers and rigid time-table as followed in many urban schools, is not conducive for activity based teaching since it requires flexibility in timings as well as the need for teachers to *interrelate the different curricular areas.* Involving children in planning is a very desirable approach since it not only activates their thinking and provides them opportunity to make choices and take decisions but it also invites greater involvement and interest from them.

The daily plan must include some time every day for physical education/ sports / games and for art/ music/ drama.

TEACHING- LEARNING STRATEGIES

For an effective child- centered programme the methodology , as already mentioned earlier, must be **activity - based** and **joyful** for children. The advantages of the activity based method are that children

- get opportunity to learn, not by rote but by doing and experiencing, which leads to better understanding
- get opportunity to practice skills e.g. of reading and writing, in a joyful way which ensures not only development of skills but also development of interest and motivation to use the skills .
- get opportunity to learn at their own pace and according to their own style of learning
- get opportunity to experiment, discover, create and construct their own knowledge

- develop a more sustained interest in learning
- get opportunity to strengthen the four pillars of learning

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING- LEARNING			
LEVEL I		*LEVEL II & LEVEL III*	
Stories	*Activities with conversation /discussion*	*Stories*	*Dramatization/*
Drama		*Book Reading*	*Role Play*
Poems & songs	*Art , music etc.*	*Projects*	*Language/ Maths games*
Puppets	*Creative use of blackboard*	*Surveys*	*Preparation of materials*
Language/ circle games	*Teacher made materials e.g. dominoes, puzzles, cards etc.*	*Creative use of black board*	*Use of maps & globe etc.*
Picture reading		*Quiz*	*Cross words*
Story books		*Discussions*	*Developing questions/ conducting experiments*
Nature walk/outings		*Art / Music Composition*	*Developing Riddles/Puzzles*
		Brain Storming	*Making scrap books*
		Creative writing	*Nature walk*
		Presentations	

It is very necessary to note that activity - based teaching, by involving participation of every child inevitably requires more time for any learning area as compared to the teacher- centered , direct method of teaching. However, it leads to more integrated learning if activities are planned in that way. At the beginning, when teachers are not used to it, it requires more effort on their part

as well. However, what is important to remember is that learning through the activity - based method is much better and more lasting . If we want all children to learn and learn through understanding, and not by rote, then there can be no alternative to this method.

Keeping in view the new thinking as reflected in Chapter 4 on multiple intelligence and the known differences in children's ways of learning, it becomes necessary to plan out *different ways of teaching* the same thing using different approaches or media. Therefore, the teachers need to have with them a stock of a wide range of activities for each learning area which they can fall back upon.

It is also important to remember that activity- based teaching does not necessarily mean teaching through a well produced kit. A large number of activities are possible even without use of any extra materials by merely making more creative use of the given textbook, blackboard or the immediate environment for example putting two dashes followed by an alphabet (-- **t**) on the blackboard and asking each child to guess the word and write the guessed word on the blackboard is a lot of fun for children. In the process a class of 30 children will have 30, three letter words on the blackboard and larger vocabulary.

A very crucial aspect of the activity based teaching- learning is the need to continuously keep track of progress in children's learning using the given MLLs as indicators. The risk otherwise in this approach is that because of it's informal nature unless planned properly, children may enjoy the activities but not really gain from them in terms of the expected learning outcomes. We will come back to this topic in greater detail a little later in the chapter.

MULTIGRADE TEACHING

The multigrade teaching (handling more than one grade at a time/simultaneously by the teacher) is a common phenomena at the primary stage varied constraints. In India more than 80% schools have to function in a multigrade set up in one way or the other. The demands of these schools are quite different from those of the monograde schools (where teacher handles one grade at a time) and hence this has it own type of implications for pedagogy.

Some suggestions for handling such situations include:

- *use of alternative grouping (same ability, mixed ability and grade wise) and strategies*
- *seating arrangement in small groups instead of rows*
- *flexibility in time table*
- *use of locally available material in the classroom activities*
- *use of graded self-learning material.*
- *reorganization of given curricula to facilitate simultaneous work with children across grades*
- *better management of children's learning time by engaging them in cooperative/paired learning activities and ensuring follow up*
- *sufficient time to teachers for planning classroom activities*
- *regular interaction amongst teachers through cluster level meetings*
- *development of learning corners (at preferably no cost) wherein children can have easy access to material while doing activities*

This topic is discussed in Part II of the document.

CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

The kind of classroom climate created by the teacher has a lot to do with how much the children will gain from this approach. Organizing and managing the classroom therefore becomes an important area which needs attention. Let us first consider what are the requirements of an activity-based or child-friendly classroom? A child- friendly, activity-based classroom requires:

- a flexible class arrangement to allow for change from large group to small group activities or from quiet to more energetic activities. e.g. a circle game after a story reading session
- an arrangement which makes interaction and communication among children easier to enable them to learn from/ with each other
- an arrangement which provides opportunity to children to choose their activities and areas of interest
- a display in which every child can find something of his/ her own which s/he can identify with and thus feel proud to be a part of the class
- an arrangement which allows scope for children to work at their own pace and according to their own style
- a periodically changing display which arouses the curiosity of the children and stimulates them to discuss and share ideas with others

Keeping these requirements in mind, how can we create a more child-friendly classroom?

Let us try and find an answer in terms of the following elements:

- physical environment

- class arrangement
- time management

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE CLASSROOM

The motivation of a child for coming to school is largely dependent on the school's and classroom's physical environment and these also help to develop in the child appreciation of aesthetic beauty and orderliness.

Class Display is an important aspect of the environment. While in some schools proper display boards are available, in others teachers have been seen to improvise with tying gunny material or old sarees along a wall to provide for display. The class display should have:

- some interesting pictures which should relate to the themes being taught in the class at that time so that the children's curiosity can be aroused and they are stimulated to talk with each other on that theme
- children's own work . Often teachers put up only the 'good' work and some children do not get an opportunity to see their work displayed . This serves to demotivate them. It is desirable to put up something or the other made by every child so that the child feels proud of it and develops a sense of belonging to that class

The class display should be at the eye level of children . Teachers often keep the displayed items at a height to prevent children from spoiling them. Instead, teachers should, through repeated guidance, help children learn to look after the things in the class . It is also necessary to periodically change the display so that the child's curiosity stays aroused and the child looks forward to what is new! e.g. painting classroom walls with pictures is therefore not as good an idea as having a display which can be frequently changed.

Learning Corners: Organization of learning corners in the class is a desirable way of catering to children with different interests and different learning styles. Learning corner can be arranged for each curricular area also. For each corner it is not necessary to have any expensive equipment . Relevant locally available material , improvised learning aids, children's collections,

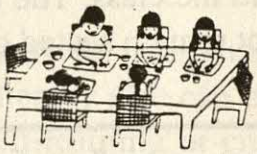
materials available under the Operation Blackboard can all be well utilized.. Children should have access to the corner and interact with the material individually or with other children as and when required.

Classroom Library: To encourage and promote children's interest in reading and learning, easy access to books is very important. Unfortunately, even in many well equipped schools, books other than the textbooks are available only in a separate library and there is a period for using it, in most cases once a week. And there is every chance that a child may not be in a mood to read at that specified time. In government schools, supplementary books are provided but rarely used since there are no arrangements for storing them in the classroom. In the interest of promoting not only reading skills and reading habits, but even self learning skills, making provision for class libraries and using them is a very useful facility at the primary stage.

CLASS ARRANGEMENT

We can consider class arrangement in terms of

- Sitting Arrangement
- Grouping of children



Sitting Arrangement

The success of any classroom activity is largely dependent on the **sitting and class arrangement**. This includes sitting position of not only the children but also the teacher. The common practice in most schools of children sitting in rows may be suitable for keeping children quiet (!) but definitely prevents interaction and communication between children since it does not provide for eye to eye contact among them which is an essential requirement for effective communication.

While in small groups it is desirable for children to form *circles* , for a large group activity *a semi- circle* arrangement is more useful with the teacher at one end, so that every one can see everyone else. Again , the activity would often dictate the position e.g., a story telling session is much more effective if

children sit close to the teacher in a close -knit group. Poems and songs or dramatization which require action , would require children to stand and perform. In a large class children can stand in groups with one child- leader with each group.

The Teacher's Seat : The teacher's sitting/ standing position makes a large difference again to the way an activity is conducted. Teachers, in the child- centered approach , need to bring themselves down physically to the level of the children so that they can feel secure and relate to them. For this it is necessary that the teacher should sit at the same level as the children in a small group situation or at only a slightly higher level in a whole class situation so that every child can see the teacher and whatever s/he is showing. It has often been seen that teachers stand and teach or even tell a story while children are sitting on the ground. Children have to strain their necks to be able to see the teacher. It is advisable to keep the children's eye-level as the desirable height at which the teacher should be sitting.

It is also necessary for a teacher in this approach to try and give attention to every child in the class. The teacher needs to therefore be moving among the children and not remain seated on her/his seat.

The Teacher on his/her feet is worth two on the seat!

Grouping

The child at the primary stage , as we have discussed elsewhere too, is at a stage when s/he needs individualized attention and supervision. Given the existing situation in our schools, both government and private, where the classes are more often than not , too large for teachers to be able to handle effectively, grouping of children is an effective strategy for better management of children's learning. At the same time there are many activities in the class which can be more effectively carried out in a whole class approach e.g. story telling, or poems and songs. There is therefore need to have a flexible seating

arrangement in the class which can provide for alternating between large, small group and individual activities.

Grouping can be on the basis of :

- interest and styles of learning
- ability levels
- age

Depending on the nature of the learning task. In learning situations which require guidance and supervision on the part of individual children , a mixed ability grouping can be more effective since the teacher cannot make herself available to all children at the same time. For example, activities like looking for words from a dictionary or doing a collage are better given in a mixed ability group . This encourages cooperative learning in children since the brighter children can help the not so bright. Children are known to learn better from each other. A creative art activity on the other hand , is generally provided individually to children.

In situations where the teacher has to provide individual attention to children, the teacher can also adopt a strategy whereby s/he can divide children into three to four groups. S/he can give some self-learning or creative tasks to the other groups while working intensively with one group only at a time with undivided attention. S/he can rotate the same activity with the other groups in the same way on another day or at a different time, group by group. It can be a good idea to write the three or four activities planned for the day on the blackboard and ensure that each group gets a turn with all the activities.

Many teachers like to introduce a new learning area or topic in a whole group to the children and then give them various activities over a period of time in smaller groups, or in pairs for reinforcement and practice as also for being able to work further on it according to their own level. This approach is helpful in a multi- level strategy as suggested in this framework.

An important element in group work is that although the task assigned to the group may be common , every child must have a role to perform which should be defined for her/ him. Often it has been observed that some children

are more active and complete the task while a few children in the gorup may not have participated at all. It is also necessary to ensure that the number of children assigned to a group is manageable.

TIME MANAGEMENT

In a child- centered approach which is less structured as compared to the teacher- centered approach, the management of time, both of the teacher and the child is very important. Let us consider a situation where the teacher spends three to four days in preparing a cardboard T. V. or a large model of the solar system which is used in only one lesson by the teacher and is too fragile to give in the hands of children! Is it worth the while?

Similarly , let us think of a situation where the teacher gives one group of children an activity like reading individually from their textbooks and attends to another group . If the teacher does not monitor what the children have done the children 's time may well go waste. In the same way , making grade 4 children carry out an activity appropriate for grade 1 can be a waste of time for them. Teaching higher level concepts to children who have not yet understood even the easier ones along with the fast learners can again be an example of poor time management. Making optimal use of the time therefore is an important concern for which proper planning of activities becomes important.

TEACHING- LEARNING MATERIALS

Teaching - learning materials are the actual vehicle that carries the curriculum to the child. Till now the text- book has been the most important and in many cases, the only teaching- learning material for the child at the primary stage. The quality of the teaching-learning material particularly in terms of how child-friendly it is, is likely to determine how much the child will benefit from it. The child- friendliness depends on:

- how far its language is suitable for the child for whom it is meant,

- how far the content is relevant for the child and within the child's level of comprehension
- how far it promotes activity based learning through the content and exercises suggested
- how far does it create interest and motivation in the child to read it and learn more about what is read

Evaluation of textbooks that are being used in the schools presently indicates that most text- books do not meet these requirements adequately. Often, the authors themselves admit that the textbooks, though meant for children, are actually developed keeping the teacher in mind. The teaching - learning aids also, which are often developed by teachers seem to be more teacher- centered , to be used as teaching aids or models rather than as learning aids for children.

What are the kinds of materials that are likely to facilitate carrying out of a child- centered, multi level, activity - based programme more successfully ?

Before we address this issue let us ask ourselves another question.

Are Textbooks necessary ?

The existing practice is of providing one textbook per grade for each of the curricular areas . For EVS for Grades 1 & 2 there are no textbooks prescribed but most schools go in for textbooks for these areas as well. **Evidently therefore there is a need for textbooks** . But this is more a teacher's need since teachers want to have the entire content for teaching provided to them in a sequenced way so that they can teach 'methodically'. This is a genuine need of the system ,particularly, since in many cases the teachers themselves are not confident of their knowledge of the content that has to be taught. It also helps parents, in the case of those who are educated, to help children at home with their studies. But in the process, what happens? Most of times we end up giving books to children which do not attract them, which often on their own make little sense to them since they are information loaded. With such books

children fail to make any lasting bond! In other words we end up making books that are child- unfriendly.

What could be the way out ?

One of the ways out could be to make two kinds of materials - one for teachers and the other for children, in line with their respective needs.

The Teacher's Need

What do the teachers need? Teachers need a detailed guide which should give them in a very well sequenced way :

- details of the content to be taught to the children with explanation of difficult concepts , if any
- details of the possible techniques to be used to 'teach' the content in a very well sequenced way indicating:
  - ⇒ how previous learning can be assessed
  - ⇒ how the learning unit has to be introduced
  - ⇒ what activities can be conducted with children ,who may be at different levels of attainment,
  - ⇒ what could be the ways to assess if and to what extent children have attained the expected outcomes identified for that learning area
  - ⇒ what could be the remedial activities for helping children who have not attained

The Child's Need

The child's need is on the other hand very different. What does the child actually need ? The child needs material in conformity with the way the child learns.

In Chapter 4, we have discussed characteristics of children's learning. Keeping those in mind we can say that children at the primary stage need teaching-learning material, whether in the form of books or kit material/aids, which help the child

- ***progress from actual, concrete experience, through two dimensional picture representations to more abstract ideas, in a graded way.***

- ***progress from familiar to unfamiliar situations/ideas***

- ***get interested and excite her/his curiosity and imagination while bringing in some element of humour as well !***

- ***read and understand whatever is to be learnt easily by using bold print and level of language which is largely part of the child's vocabulary and level of comprehension***

  ⇒ ***by including concepts which are within the child's capacity to understand***

  ⇒ ***by including themes/content which are drawn from and relevant to the child's daily life***

  ⇒ ***by providing the child opportunity to revisit concepts***

- ***derive a sense of satisfaction on completing a book/material which is not too lengthy***

- ***get encouraged to explore, experiment and discover knowledge from the world around her/ him***

- ***get attracted to them by having interesting, funny and 'alive' illustrations which stimulate the child to not only use the material but also want to share it with her/his friends !***

If we compare the wide difference between the teacher's requirements and the needs of the child, it becomes clearly evident that the materials for children and for teacher cannot be combined without compromising on their respective needs.

Another important consideration in developing Teaching -Learning materials for children is that children at the primary stage (as mentioned in Chapter 4) learn through active experience, exploration and experimentation. The textbook by itself can at best only provide some two dimensional representation of real life objects or situations and not concrete experience. Thus it has also been observed generally that once a text book is provided, even if a kit or activities are suggested, teachers have a tendency to limit the teaching to the textbook only. This does not provide adequate concept clarity to the child and there is a tendency on the part of the child to learn the given material by rote.

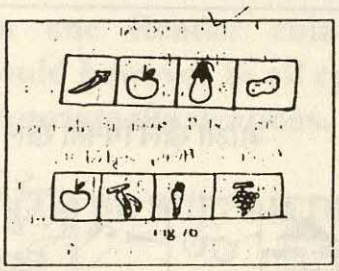
Textbooks also, by themselves, are generally not able to cater to the spiral nature of children's learning adequately because of their linear approach moving from 'simple to complex'.

In view of the above considerations the following scheme of teaching learning materials is suggested for children and teachers for the different levels.

CHILDREN'S TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS *
(TO BE SUPPLIED)
Level 1 (Classes I & II)

Language	(I)	• Graded Reader cum Workbook in the form of three/four modules
	(C)	• Kit of alphabets, `matra' cards, dominoes, word puzzles etc
Mathematics	(I)	• Graded Workbook in the form of three to four modules
	(C)	• Kit of number Readiness material, number cards, dominoes, abacus etc
Environmental Education		• Workbook
Art Education	(C)	• Local/improvised musical instruments
	(I)	• Each of the workbooks in the above areas should have some blank pages for creative art work, which will thus link art to that curricular area

* C = a few sets for whole class ; I = Individually for each child

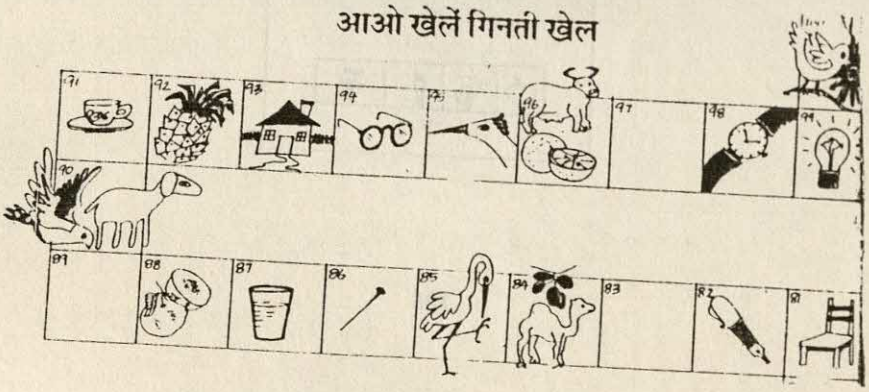


LEVEL II (Classes III and IV)

Language	(I)	• Reader cum workbook in three to four modules
	(C)	• Supplementary Reading Material in form of story books, children's magazines etc.
Mathematics	(I)	• Workbook in three to four modules with some examples etc. in child friendly format for self learning
Environmental Education	(I)	• Textbook cum workbook with alternative, child friendly formats e.g. stories, anecdotes etc. in three to four modules
Art Education		• As for Level I

* C = a few sets for whole class ; I = Individually for each child

आओ खेलें गिनती खेल



LEVEL III (Class V)

Language	(I)	• Reader-cum-workbook in three to four modules
	(C)	• Supplementary Reading Material in form of Story books, Travelogues Magazines etc.
Mathematics	(I)	• Workbooks in 2 modules with focus on self-learning in child friendly format
	(C)	• Mathematics Kit supplied under Operation Blackboard
Environmental Education	(I)	• Textbook -cum-Workbook with child friendly format in the form of two modules
Art Education	(C)	• As for Level I

* C = a few sets for whole class ; I = Individually for each child

*** At all levels Language and Environmental Education can be also integrated meaningfully in one Reader cum Workbook only. The Mathematics workbooks should however in all case have content related to real life situations with appropriate illustrations.**

TEACHER'S MATERIAL (TO BE SUPPLIED)

Teacher's guides in all areas including Art Education in the form of detailed teachers version of textbooks/workbook in tune with the needs of teachers identified above. These should focus on both subject content and pedagogy.

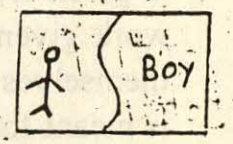
The teacher's guide would in addition to the details regarding use of the suggested materials also detail out use of supplementary material available in the school as part of operation Blackboard. The Workbooks could also derive exercises/activities involving use of the O.B. material including story books.

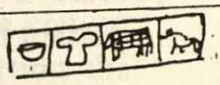
The intention of providing workbooks in 3-4 modules is to provide for children to learn at their own pace within a level in a flexible, multilevel situation. Therefore materials for grades I and 2, for example under Level 1, would be common but graded.

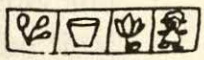
Each module is expected to be of not more than 30-40 pages to give the child a sense of achievement and progress, as the child moves to the next module after completing the previous module.

For children who are fast learners, within a level a fifth module in the form of enrichment material should be made available in the form of a few copies. The enrichment material should focus on more in-depth understanding and skills related to learning at the existing level and not include the content for the next level.

SOME TEACHING AIDS FOR TEACHERS	SOME LEARNING AIDS FOR CHILDREN
• Teacher handbooks • Compilation Of Stories, Rhymes/ activities etc. • Models • Wall Maps • Globe • Maps • Posters/Charts • Mathematics Kit • Science Kit • Blackboard • Pool of diagnostic items	• Story Books • Art Material • Improvised Musical Instruments • Dominoes (Shape, Colour, Word, Picture, Number Etc.} • Puzzles/Blocks/Games • Open - Ended Picture Cards • Number Cards • Alphabet Cards • Picture Charts • Puppets e.g. Stick/Finger • Story Cards • Dictionary • Children's Encyclopedia • Globe • Blackboard • Balls • Outdoor Equipment • Workbooks • Concrete material/situations in the immediate environment







Teaching Aids or Learning Aids?

Teachers are being given an annual contingency to develop teaching learning materials : These can be both teaching aids or learning aids?

- Teaching aids are those handled by teachers only for demonstration e.g. a model is a teaching aid
- Learning aids are those which children can manipulate and thus learn from them e.g. dominoes /puzzles are learning aids

Homework

Assigning homework at the primary stage is not to be treated as compulsory and should be left to the discretion of the class teacher. However, if homework is given it should not be an exact repetition or extension of class work. The work given should be interesting, creative and of a kind that children can do themselves or maybe with parents supervision only. In other words homework is meant for the child not the parents. The work should not lead to any stress or burden on the child. It is also important for the teacher to check back completion of the work to ensure homework is taken seriously. e.g. Home work assigned after a unit on "Time" is taught at level 3 could be asking the child to procure a railway timetable and study the time of arrival and departure of important trains from the village/town/city the child lives in.

Homework

Why is it that homework
makes my heart to cry?
'Cause however much I finish,
it keeps on piling high.

Why it is that homework,
makes me feel so bored ?
Leaving no time, to play & fly,
with all this heavy load

Why is it that homework
can't be games & fun ?
Which would make me do it,
while doing, I would learn.

Sushmita Malik

Making Assessment Child Friendly

Assessment of children's progress is a crucial aspect of any teaching - learning situation. It is integral to the teaching learning process and can not be viewed away from it. Unfortunately, in today's context, instead of supporting the teaching learning process it tends to dominate it and is treated by parents and teachers alike as an end in itself ! Inevitably it is the child who bears the final brunt of it !

In this section we will review this aspect and try to answer three specific questions in this regard.

Why do we need to assess children's learning?

What should be assessed and when ?

How should assessment be done?

WHY DO WE NEED TO ASSESS CHILDREN'S LEARNING?

Teaching, learning and assessment, all bear a very close relationship with each other. Teaching cannot/should not continue without taking stock of what is taught has been imbibed by the children or not and for the purpose of ensuring that, assessment becomes an essential aspect of the Teaching - Learning process.

To put it in another way, we can say assessment is a vital part of the teaching-learning cycle, as you can see in figure I.

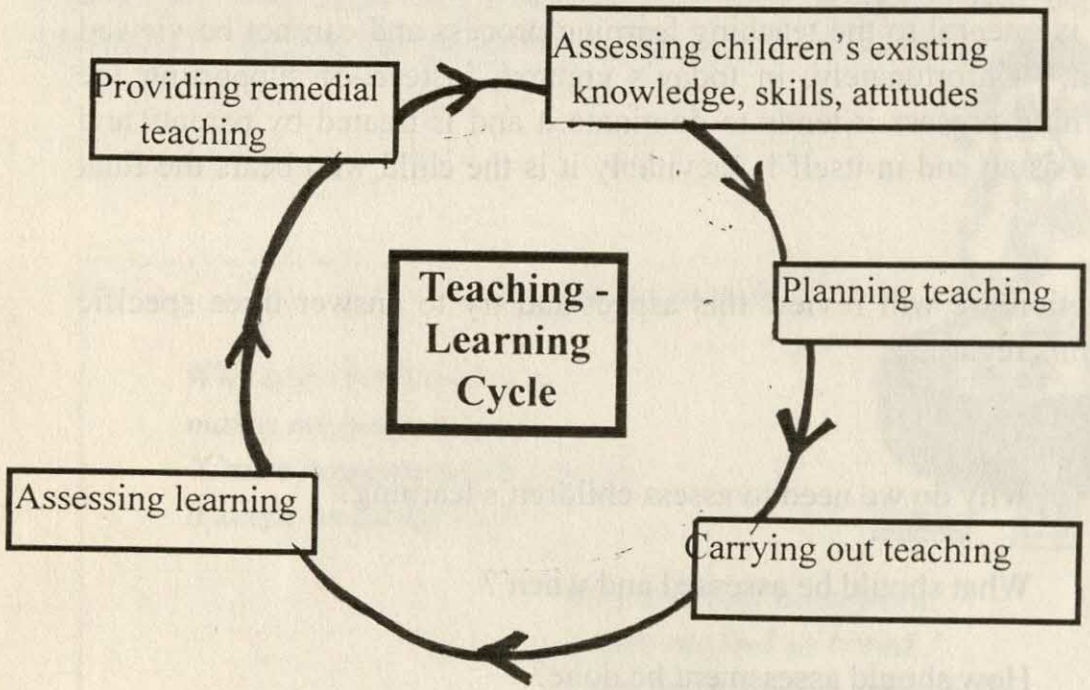


Fig. 1

Assessment is required for a number of purposes :

- ***most important of all to help improve an individual child's learning as also the quality of the total learning programme***

- ***to provide feedback to parents, to the teacher of the next grade and to the children***

- ***to award some qualification for eligibility of entry to the next stage of education e.g. a centralized assessment in grade V***

- ***to monitor overall national standards in education***

- ***to identify broad learning needs of children to carry out resource planning and review of curriculum at all levels***

Assessment is **not** meant as generally believed for

- passing judgments on child's abilities or potential

- comparing children's abilities and giving them ranks

NEED FOR CHANGE OF ATTITUDE

Basically, therefore, the first step in reviewing assessment practices, particularly at primary stage, is to help **change the attitudes** of all concerned towards the purpose of assessment.

'Marks'; 'ranks', 'grades' seem to emerge in the present day system as major concerns, thus increasing the sense of unhealthy competition and often leading to traumatic experiences for children. Humiliation, low self esteem and

demoralization are inevitable outcomes or emotions which therefore get associated generally with assessment in the case of a large number of children.(The `test' or the `examination conducted' also more often than not, focuses on `what the child does not know' rather than on `what the child knows'!)

The entire teaching-learning process thus does little to help the child 'learn to be " as discussed in chapter 2. Also, the results of the assessment generally do not get followed up with any remedial teaching to help the child, and the child's learning gap gets wider and still wider.

There is need to impress therefore that assessment of individual child's progress is essentially to be diagnostic in nature. Its specific purpose is to improve teaching and learning by (a) diagnosing learning strengths and weaknesses (b) measuring the child's progress against the given MLLs and (c) reviewing the teaching learning strategies and replanning where necessary.

WHAT SHOULD BE ASSESSED AND WHEN

The primary education curriculum is geared towards helping the child

- Learn to know
- Learn to do
- Learn to live together with others
- Learn to be

Assessment of the child's progress therefore has to address all these aspects particularly in terms of MLL identified for each curricular area. The intention of evaluation should be to bring all children upto a satisfactory level of attainment and not be content with having children pass with 40% marks. Assessment is therefore to be `comprehensive' and ' continuous' in nature. It should also aim at finding out what the child 'knows' and not only what he/she 'does not know'.

How often should a child's progress be assessed? As we all know learning takes place on a continuum. As a result, if we want to ensure that the child's progress is satisfactory keeping the expected learning outcomes in mind, we will need to keep on assessing the child's learning on a continuous basis so as to identify difficulties, if any, and attend to them in time.

In the proposed multilevel approach this becomes even more important since the assessment would decide at which stage the child is within a level and will need to be provided the learning experiences accordingly.

Therefore while some kind of assessment will be required on a regular basis, a more structured assessment will be required at some **`key transition points'** both within a level and across the levels.

As discussed in the section on Materials, it is suggested that the workbook should be prepared in graded modular form. To facilitate the monitoring of children's progress, some structured evaluation items therefore should be included both at the beginning and at the end of every module which could help the teacher to decide the entry level of the child as also to decide if the child is ready for the next stage.

The assessment will thus have to be very individual based and is not envisaged as whole class exercise to be carried out routinely and simultaneously as a half yearly and annual examination, within a level.

At the end of each of the three levels however, a whole class assessment will be required to ensure that all the children are `ready' for the next level. Given the multilevel approach, it is expected that all children, except a few with special needs, should be able to reach this stage of readiness.

HOW SHOULD ASSESSMENT BE DONE

The `how' of assessment can be considered under three main heads:

assessment techniques and procedures
recording of information obtained
reporting on child's progress

Assessment Techniques and Procedures:

Learning, to take place, needs a variety of experiences. How do we know that each child is actually learning while going through the planned experiences? We use different ways. Sometimes we just observe the child doing some activity , interacting with the fellow members of the group ; sometimes we place the child in contrived situations and do systematic observations. At other times we try to find out the child's achievement through oral questioning only and sometimes expect the child to write answers to questions.

Why do we do so? Because learning of different aspects does not take place in isolation and hence a variety of techniques are required to find out the attainment of various aspects.

Assessment can be

- both formal and informal
- oral, written or performance based
- quantitative or qualitative based on teachers' observation in different situations
- individually conducted or conducted in groups or as a whole class

Remember: Every learning outcome does not lend itself to quantitative assessment - for example, cooperation or tolerance. These can however be assessed qualitatively through observation of child's behaviour in different situations and over a period of time.

To facilitate the work of assessing children with a view to helping them make satisfactory progress in learning the teacher should be supplied a collection of *diagnostic test items* covering the entire range of expected learning outcomes in a graded way. *Diagnostic test items* are prepared specifically to help identify the exact strengths and weaknesses of the child to plan further inputs.

Recording Children's Progress

Keeping in view the large numbers in the class and the need for individualized assessment, any recording technique suggested should be

- easy to use
- easy to store/save
- easy to interpret

There can be different ways of recording a child's progress e.g.keeping samples of drafts/ materials prepared by the child, checklist/observation schedule, a proforma at the end of each module etc..

Reporting Children's Progress:

Who do we report to ?

The main persons who will benefit from assessment records are

- the children
- the teacher of the next grade
- the parents

What do we report ?

A report should:

- incorporate what children have learned, not what they have been taught
- be written with the reader in mind in simple , non-technical language.
- should include briefly the child's performance since the last report
- highlight positive achievement and progress made
- identify weaknesses and suggest positive remedial measures
- be written with a view to motivating the child for further learning

Remember: Context is often necessary to understanding child's performance. Reference to a specific piece of work done by the child e.g. a composition will often help the parent to interpret their child's performance. Many skills, personal qualities, attitudes and achievement are explained and understood better when placed in context.

How do we report ?

We report to the parents and teacher of the next grade in the form of quarterly consolidated report cards accompanied by informal discussions with the parents

from time to time. Providing a space on the report card for the comments of parents will encourage parental involvement.

Grades Verses Marks

Marks tend to lead to unhealthy competition among children and do not necessarily differentiate between the ability levels of children as claimed. Also since children's pace and style of learning vary, comparisons according to marks are undesirable. For recording progress, grades provide a better index within a range.

Remember: A positive report goes a long way in building the confidence and self esteem of the child. Teachers must therefore ensure that positive remarks precede any negative comment.

Role of the Teacher in the Teaching-Learning Process:-

Undoubtedly the teacher's role in the context of a child-centred class is that of a facilitator, friend and guide. A detailed description of the role is given in chapter VII.

The whole process of a child-centred approach can however be successfully adopted provided certain basic learning conditions exist in the school. The following chapter dwells on this very theme.

Chapter 6

Essential Learning Conditions

ESSENTIAL LEARNING CONDITIONS

Our country is in the process of enacting a constitutional amendment by which elementary education will soon be made compulsory and will get recognized as a fundamental right of every child below the age of 14 years. This would involve serious liability on the part of both the parents and the government for ensuring that their child goes to school and on the part of the government for providing educational facilities for every child.

The question that we need to address here is what does this liability really involve? Is merely providing 'a primary school' enough to honour this commitment to the child ? Or, does it have to be a primary school/education which ensures at least the minimum essential learning conditions so that every child gets an opportunity to be able to attain at least the minimum levels of learning?

If we want children to come to school , stay in school and learn whatever is required in school , there can be no two opinions that we must ensure that schools are able to meet the conditions considered essential for learning. A very large percentage of our schools unfortunately tend to fall into the first category wherein even the most minimum of conditions are not available.

In this chapter we will discuss the following questions:

- **what are the existing conditions in a large number of primary schools today?**
- **what are the conditions considered essential for learning?**

EXISTING CONDITIONS

If we consider the status of primary schools in the country today we will find a wide range, in terms of facilities and quality of education offered to the children. On the one hand we have schools, particularly in urban areas, which cater to the more elite society. Some of these are likely to be comparable to the best schools anywhere in the world. At

the other end we have a very large number of schools in the government sector , particularly in the more remote rural and tribal areas , which do not even have a teacher for every class or a proper blackboard! And most likely , these would be the schools catering to the children who are first generation learners and have little or no support for learning from the home front, either! This makes these children doubly disadvantaged!

Let us take a look at some statistics which will help us understand the scene better.

SCENARIO IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

- ***SCHOOLS AT A DISTANCE OF MORE THAN 1 KM ARE 5.5%***
- ***SCHOOLS RUNNING IN OPEN SPACES 7.5%***
- ***NO BLACK BOARDS IN 38.50% PRIMARY SCHOOLS***
- ***ONLY ONE ROOM FOR FOUR/FIVE CLASSES IN 34.94% SCHOOLS***
- ***NO DRINKING WATER FACILITY IN 42.6% SCHOOLS***
- ***NO TOILET FACILITY IN 84.5% SCHOOLS***
- ***INCREASE IN TEACHER PUPIL RATIO FROM 1:39 TO 1:45 FROM 1981-82 TO 1992-93.***
- ***ONLY ONE TEACHER IN POSITION IN 28.91% SCHOOLS***

This information is in no way exhaustive, nor universal, since there are wide variations from one region to another, and often within a region as well. These statistics are merely an indication of the large number of schools in the country that are functioning in very difficult circumstances . Can we realistically expect children in some of these so

called 'schools' to be able to really achieve even the minimum levels of learning ?

ESSENTIAL LEARNING CONDITIONS

The National Policy on Education (1986) clearly stressed that "to promote equality, it will be necessary to provide for equal opportunities to all not only in access but also in " conditions for success". What are these conditions that can be termed as being essential for success for primary grade children? Let us try to consider these in terms of conditions related to the

- ***child***
- ***school***
- ***teacher***

Conditions Related to the Child

Good Physical Health and Emotional Security

For a child to be able to gain optimally from the school programme in terms of being able to learn to know, to do ,to live together with others and to learn to be, it is essential for a child to be in satisfactory physical and mental health and also feel a sense of emotional security . The responsibility for ensuring this lies largely with the family . However, in a very large number of cases the family/parents are not able to provide appropriate nutrition and health care to the child due to impoverished family conditions or sometimes even due to lack of knowledge. Often due to difficult home situations children come to school feeling emotionally insecure as well.

The school can, to some extent, compensate with a :

- good mid- day meal programme
- effective school health programme
- parent interaction and education programme focusing on areas of nutrition, health care and appropriate child- rearing practices

- warm and joyful school environment

Readiness for Schooling

The child comes into school around the age of six years. The first six years of life are considered the most critical years as these lay the foundation for life and are also likely to determine the extent to which a child will gain from primary education. If a child is brought up in a happy, secure and stimulating environment s/he also develops in these years the necessary readiness for primary schooling which later helps the child to adjust to school and perform to the best of her/ his capacity. This readiness is:

⇒ personal and social readiness in terms of:

- *developing interest in and habit of going to school, clean and properly bathed and dressed and with proper toilet habits. Also, with a sense of confidence and self- esteem which comes from receiving appreciation from others and experiencing success.*

⇒ academic readiness in terms of:

- *becoming familiar with , and possessing an adequate vocabulary in the language used in the school which in many cases is different from that used in school . This would be necessary before learning to read and write in that language.*

- *basic concepts and intellectual skills like classifying , ordering objects along any dimension , solving simple problems etc. which are needed to understand simple mathematics and science concepts*

⇒ readiness for sports, art , music, dance , drama *etc*. in terms of :

- *good body control and eye- hand coordination and coordination of fine and large muscles.*

According to research, this readiness is very important from the point of view of helping children do well in school. Unfortunately , due to factors discussed in Chapter 1 , most children in today's situation , do not get the necessary experiences and environment at home to be able to develop this readiness. This is particularly so for the first generation learners.

The solution therefore , lies in providing **Early Childhood Education** (ECE) of an appropriate kind to them which can compensate for the deficits at the home front and help children develop the required readiness. It has been established from research that a child with Early Childhood Education experiences adjusts and achieves better and continues in the school system longer as compared to the children who come into primary schools directly from the homes. There is need therefore to provide all children opportunity to attend a good Early Childhood Programme which would provide them a sound base for learning.

In the absence of a good ECE programme, (until the facility gets universalized) readiness for schooling can to some extent be ensured through building in a two to three month long **school -readiness programme at the beginning of Class 1 .** In situations where the child's home language is different from the school language , the need for a **'bridge' programme at the primary stage** also becomes an essential requirement. (This is discussed in detail in Part 2 of this document).

Attendance in School

Attending school regularly is the first and foremost condition for effective and continuous learning. In the rural set- up irregular attendance of children becomes a major problem since it brings about a break in children's learning as well as in the habit of coming to school.
The common reasons for children not coming regularly should therefore be identified and possible solutions worked out. Some of the reasons are:

- house-hold chores
- working for the family
- sibling care
- going away to the fields during the harvest season

- uninteresting school routine
- inclement weather etc.

Some of these problems are more specific to the girl child. Possible ways of addressing these problems could be through :

- *creating awareness among the parents regarding the importance of education for their children, both girls and boys, and the need to send them to school regularly*

- *providing alternative child care facility like day- care/ crèches/ anganwadis for the younger siblings with timings synchronised with the primary school to allow the older child to attend school. For 3-6 years the anganwadis are already being provided under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). Family or community based day care facilities need to be promoted through support from government and NGO'S.*

- *planning school vacations and timings in consultation with the local community to suit their schedule instead of having a uniform pattern all over*

- *making the school programme joyful and interesting by making it more activity - based and bringing in more of sports , art , music, drama into the programme*

- *having a positive , encouraging climate in the school for children in which they can express themselves without fear or inhibition rather than one founded on the belief "spare the rod and spoil the child". There should be no place in a good school programme for corporal punishment.*

Multi-level Approach to Teaching-Learning

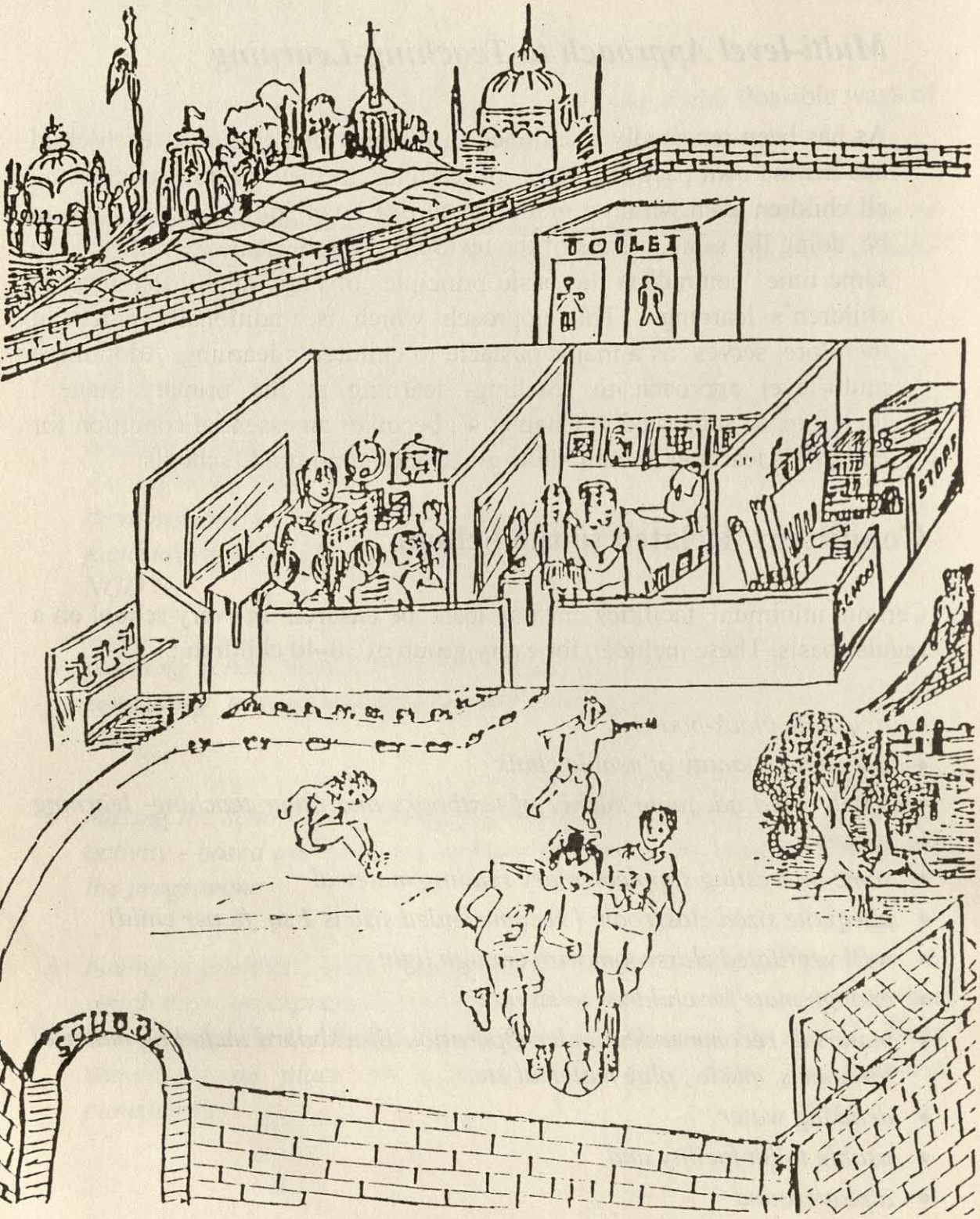
As has been repeatedly mentioned in the previous chapters , each child has her/his own pace and style of learning. In view of this , addressing all children even within a grade , as at one level and expecting them to be doing the same lessons of the textbook and the same exercises at the same time contradicts the basic principle of individual differences in children's learning. This approach which is traditionally practiced therefore, serves as a major obstacle to children's learning. Adopting a multi-level approach to teaching- learning at the primary stage , therefore, as suggested in Chapter 4 , becomes an essential condition for children's learning in both multi-grade and mono-grade schools.

Conditions Related to the School

Certain minimum facilities must at least be ensured in every school on a regular basis. These include , for every group of 30-40 children :

- *a usable black-board*
- *adequate quantity of usable chalk*
- *timely and adequate supply of textbooks and other teaching- learning material*
- *some interesting supplementary reading material*
- *adequate sized classroom (recommended size is 1 sq. ft. per child)*
- *well ventilated classroom with enough light*
- *enough mats for children to sit on*
- *material recommended under Operation Blackboard including material for sports, music , play material etc.*
- *drinking water*
- *usable toilet facility and*
- *a playground*
- *storage space*
- *most important of all a trained teacher.*

School Related



Conditions Related to Teachers

Rational appointment, posting and transfer of teachers

It is very essential at the primary stage to provide local teachers who would be better able to understand the background, culture , habits, language of the children who come to the school. The children too would be able to relate to local teachers better. The need to rationalize the posting of teachers on this basis cannot therefore, be ignored.

Particular attention also needs to be paid to the appointment of women teachers. This is very important from the point of view of encouraging girls to come to school. Resource teachers also need to be appointed where necessary, to enable children with special needs to avail greater benefit from the school programme.

It is often seen that while schools in remote areas inevitably become multi-grade schools since teachers do not want to go to these areas, schools closer to the main road / highway end up having more than the required number of teachers. The problem comes up since teachers prefer to be posted in places closer to their home places. Women teachers posted in rural areas often do not find a proper place to stay and therefore have to commute long distances to reach the school daily. This will inevitably affect their quality of teaching and the time they can devote to it.

Appointments and posting of teachers must therefore be done keeping in mind:

- ***class size***
- ***number of children with special needs***
- ***language background of children***
- ***location of the school***
- ***facilities available for teachers***

Supportive and rational posting and transfer policy for teachers will go a long way in sustaining a sense of motivation and commitment in the teachers which , in turn, would have a positive effect on children's learning.

Regular Teacher Attendance

It is necessary to ensure that every teacher attends school regularly . Equally essential is that s/he participates actively for the full duration of the school programme every day. Past experience and research studies show that this is lacking in most primary schools. How can this be ensured?

This can be facilitated if:

- *suitable service and working conditions are provided to all teachers*
- *the community gets actively involved in school management and monitoring of teacher's activities/ time*

Adequate Instructional Time

It is a well known fact that the number of working days and instructional time have a direct bearing on the amount and quality of teaching-learning activities conducted by the teacher. According to the National Curriculum Framework , the prescribed number of teaching days is 200 - 220. In the state government schools particularly this number gets drastically reduced to even as little as 100-150 due to:

- 20 % of the working days being used for annual / terminal examinations
- attending training programmes
- strikes, holidays, community functions and festivals
- teacher coming late and going early particularly in far off rural schools and

- assignment of other duties and responsibilities i.e. managing mid-day meals, election duties, conducting surveys, literacy classes, village mapping and so on.....

The extra duties that the teachers have to do, cut down on the time actually available to them for teaching . This is bound to affect children's learning. Authorities need to examine this problem very carefully and should ,as far as possible, avoid deployment of teachers for other assignments.If their services must be taken, it is very essential to make appropriate substitute arrangement for that period for teaching the children so that their schooling does not suffer.

Trained Teachers with Adequate Subject Competence

While, undoubtedly, some good teachers are "born teachers" the large majority of teachers need appropriate training to be able to teach effectively . A trained teacher therefore becomes an essential factor for facilitating children's learning. A large number of teachers in our country and in some states are not trained at all.

It is also observed that many teachers who teach at the primary level do not necessarily have adequate understanding themselves of the content to be taught, particularly in the areas of mathematics and science. It therefore becomes essential not only to give periodic training to teachers but also include subject enrichment as a necessary part of their training.

All the above factors need to be essentially attended to, if we want children at the primary stage to attain even the minimum levels of learning identified for this stage and be able to honour our commitment to child's right to basic education. Besides the above factors, along with need- based policy decisions the importance of working out effective methods of implementation and monitoring cannot be over emphasized. The crucial role that the community and other stake holders can play in this context is discussed in the chapter that follows.

Chapter 7

Helping the Teacher

HELPING THE TEACHER

Educating the child at the primary level is the combined responsibility of the teachers , the parents, school, community and institutions involved in teachers' training; planning and administration of Education at various level.

However, it is equally important to acknowledge the central role of the teacher particularly at the primary stage. ***There can be no substitute for the teacher*** and in order to get the best out of her/him there is a need for **others** to be involved to help and support her/him either directly or indirectly. These **others** can also be called '**partners**' in education.

This chapter focuses on how the teacher can be helped in her/his efforts in making primary education a success. To put this into actual practice we need to ask ourselves a number of questions and reflect upon them carefully.

- What is the expected role of the teacher in the present context?
- What are the ways in which the teacher can be helped?
- Who are the **partners** in this process?
- What are **their roles** and functions?
- How can **partnerships** be developed?

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

It is important that we look at the role of the teacher keeping in view the aims of primary education i.e. learning to know, do, live together and be ; with the child at the centre of this whole process. What are our expectations from the teacher ?

The Teacher Should:

- *FACILITATE RATHER THAN CONTROL THE LEARNING*
- *GUIDE RATHER THAN DICTATE*
- *BE A FRIEND TO THE CHILD*
- *BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE*
- *BE ACTIVE, ENTHUSIASTIC, IMAGINATIVE, RESOURCEFUL*
- *BE FLEXIBLE AND OPEN TO IDEAS*
- *BE AWARE AND KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE SUBJECT CONTENT*

It is important to think of the teacher's role in more specific terms to understand what kind of support s/he would need. Let us think of the teacher within the classroom situation with particular reference to curriculum transaction and evaluation. What should s/he be able to do?

The Teacher Should be able to:

- *manage a multilevel/multigrade class situation effectively*
- *assess continuously through formal and informal procedures the progress of every child and ensure remedial measures where necessary.*
- *create a joyful and stimulating environment in the classroom*
- *hold the child's attention and interest*
- *provide a wide variety of learning experiences i.e opportunities for every child's participation*
- *use different methods and materials depending on the child's needs and requirements*
- *motivate the child to think and ask relevant questions*
- *explain and clarify problems*
- *communicate in simple easy to understand language/ child's home language*
- *use practical examples from the child's daily life*
- *make teaching of the subjects interesting*

- *develop low cost teaching aids*
- *motivate the child towards learning to know, do, live together and be.*

What emerges clearly from the above points is ***the need for the teaching to be child centred.*** On the one hand we have our expectations from the teachers. On the other hand often teachers have to work under tremendous constraints. **What are some of the likely problems teachers face?** How can we help ? Probably if we reflect upon the reasons as to why teachers may need our support and help, strategies for doing so will become clearer. The major constraints are:

- teachers often have to teach more than one class at a time
- teachers are required to handle a wide range of pupils of different backgrounds, ages and ability levels, speaking different languages
- teachers do not get sufficient time to plan activities and develop support material
- teachers are entrusted with conducting various responsibilities other than teaching e.g. literacy classes, surveys, supervising mid-day meals, performing election duties etc.
- teachers are required to implement curricular changes periodically without getting opportunity for orientation with regard to their changes.
- teachers feel isolated in the absence of any resource support particularly in situations when their schools are located in remote inaccessible areas

Acknowledging the difficulties faced by the teacher, it becomes all the more necessary to think of ways in which s/he can be helped and enabled to perform her/his role better.

WAYS TO HELP THE TEACHER

Broadly help can be provided through two major approaches:

1. **Creating and providing support systems**. Through involvement of:

- parents
- family and other members
- members of the community
- institutions

2. **Professional development through inservice training programmes.** This is important for two major reasons:

⇒ teachers in some parts of the country join schools without any preserivce training

⇒ teachers have to implement the changes incorporated in the curriculum from time to time

To be successful, it is necessary to establish strong networking and linkages between persons, groups and institutions at various levels in the educational system.

Let us now reflect upon what is involved in both the approaches.

APPROACH -I CREATING AND PROVIDING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

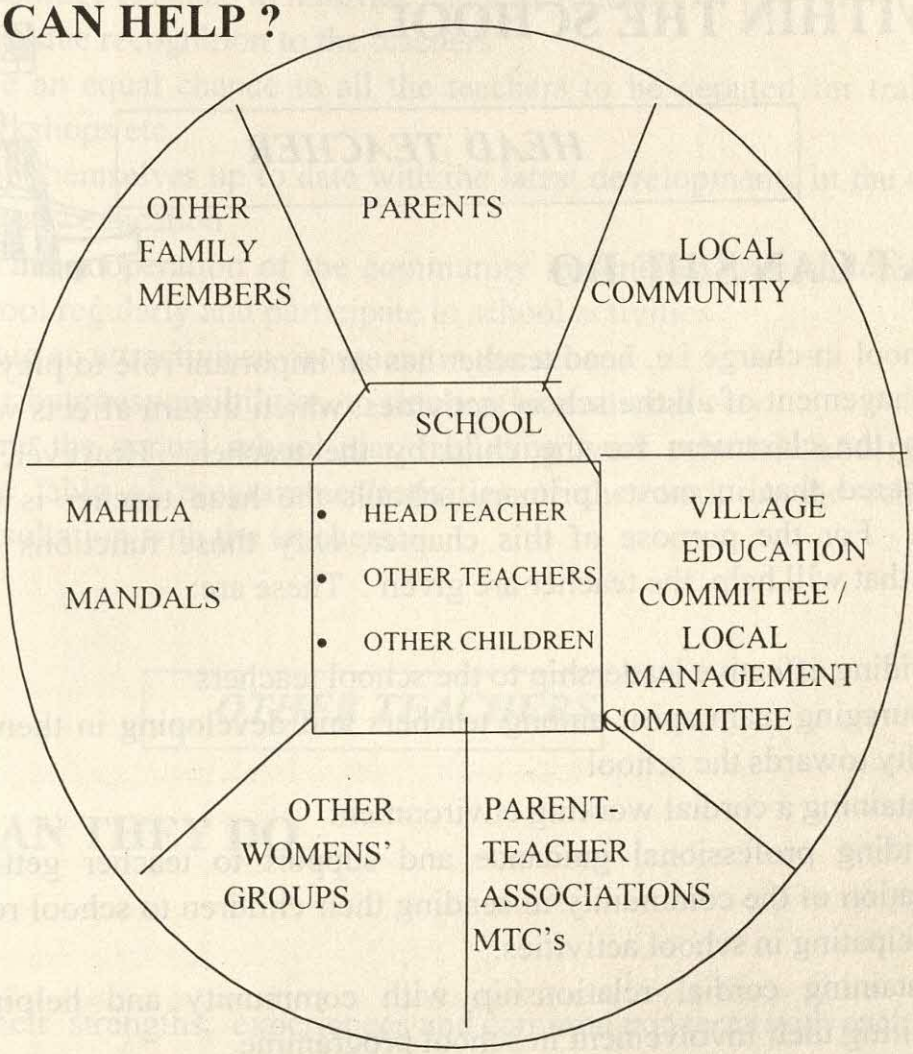
Keeping in view the school teachers who work in the rural areas the institutions that can help exist at five administrative levels of functioning. These levels correspond to - village/town, sub district, district, state and national. However it needs to be mentioned that there are some institutions that exist and operate at the level of one institute only i.e Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI's). At every level an attempt has been made to identify institutions, groups and person for support and helping the teachers with reference to three important aspects:

- **WHO CAN HELP?**
- **WHAT CAN THEY DO ?**
- **HOW CAN THIS BE DONE?**

LEVEL I - *VILLAGE / TOWN*

The first level at the grass root is the most vital as it comprises all those persons who have a stake or interest in the child's education and are thus called **'Stakeholders'.** They are the closest to the child both within and outside the school, and because of this can help the child the most through the teacher. Let us identify who these persons or groups are

WHO CAN HELP ?



It is quite clear that at this level there are two categories of people who can help the teacher - those within the school and those outside the school. Now let us consider what they can do separately.

A. WITHIN THE SCHOOL

HEAD TEACHER

WHAT CAN S/HE DO

The school in-charge i.e. head teacher has an important role to play in planning and management of all the school activities, which in turn affects what is being done in the classroom for the child by the teacher. However, it must be remembered that in most primary schools the head teacher is also a class teacher. For the purpose of this chapter, only those functions of the head teacher that will help the teacher are given . These are:

- providing effective leadership to the school teachers
- encouraging team spirit among teachers and developing in them a sense of loyalty towards the school
- maintaining a cordial working environment
- providing professional guidance and support to teacher getting the co-operation of the community in sending their children to school regularly and participating in school activities.
- maintaining cordial relationship with community and helping teachers soliciting their involvement in school programme
- serve as a role model by demonstrating her/his integrity and sense of fairness
- to provide a sense of healthy competition and motivation to teachers

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

This can be done if Head teachers:

⇒ hold regular meeting with the teachers and involve them in all decisions concerning them and the school

⇒ encourage teachers to sit together , plan and have weekly demonstrations

⇒ encourage teachers to innovate and experiment

⇒ give due recognition to the teachers

⇒ give an equal chance to all the teachers to be deputed for training / workshops etc.

⇒ keep themselves up to date with the latest developments in the area of primary education

⇒ get the cooperation of the community in sending their children in to school regularly and participate in school activities

⇒ create an attractive environment in the school

⇒ distribute responsibilities to teachers in a rational way

⇒ frame the annual school plan including work schedule and monthly time table of programmes/activities of the work in the school in consultation with the teachers.

OTHER TEACHERS

WHAT CAN THEY DO

They can:

- share their strengths, experiences and common concerns with each other
- share their innovations and ideas regarding activities and share materials with each other
- help each other solve problems based on their experience

- do joint classroom planning to support and supplement each others work

- establishing linkages between pre-primary and primary schools
- promoting, monitoring of children's progress in school as per their needs and requirements

Resource Teachers for children with special needs can:

- prepare individual educational plans for children with special needs with the class teacher
- monitor the child's progress and provide a feedback to the class teacher
- be included in joint sessions with the classroom teacher and parents to assess and plan the child's progress and future learning
- help the teacher in meeting the needs of special groups
- maintain records to show progress and change in the child.

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

They can:

- plan remedial teaching of children together on a regular basis
- organise **'teacher trade offs'** that is when a teacher with special expertise for e.g.. music teacher takes some classes, while the class teacher takes up other curriculum activities for the music teacher
- organise **'cross-age tutoring'** for e.g. a particular child is matched/ paired with another child of a different age group/class having similar interests or expertise so as to help learn from each others experiences

- arrange **'team-teaching'** sessions where expertise and responsibility is shared in either one subject area or across all subject areas. One way is for teachers to combine all classes and then regroup children by a different criteria for example a common interest which one of them shares

Developing rapport with parents :

The **Teacher** has a very important role_in developing partnerships with parents. The first step is to develop a rapport with them. Given below are activities for **developing a rapport** with parents:

- welcoming the new children/parents on the first day of school by older children and staff
- individual house visits to parents by the teachers
- parents day to be celebrated in school and used as an occasion to inform them about school activities/child's progress
- parent - teacher association to be formed and used as an opportunity to discuss the progress of children
- informal meetings on social occasion/village functions

Once rapport has been established the teacher should:

- inform them about their child's progress in all areas of work
- listen to the parents' perceptions about their child's interests, problems etc.
- implement agreed upon strategies
- let the parents know what s/he is doing to help the child
- invite the parents to participate in the schools activities. One way to get help is to list the areas in which support may be taken and the time needed for the same

- provide opportunities for parents to come together to form a support group. This helps them to share their feelings, concerns, discuss issues and help each other find solution.

OTHER CHILDREN

There are many different ways in which children can help the teacher inside and outside the classroom situation. Basically the '**child-power**' in the school can be used by encouraging:

- older children to help younger ones
- children to help others of the same age.
- children to work on their own

It must be remembered that **children learn from each other by doing things together.** It make learning more interesting and fun. It also helps in realising the aim of living together. The things they can do are given below:

WHAT CAN THEY DO

They can :

- pass on information and ideas to others.
- help to make school - playgrounds more attractive
- assist children with SEN in various activities. i.e. reading out to the blind child
- help teacher in managing the class particularly large/ multigrade classes

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

Children can be actively involved in a number of ways by the school staff . Children can be made to:

- spread messages to other children and the community on health and other related issues i.e. importance of clean drinking water, eating habits, nutritious food and importance of the environment.

- conduct activities in multigrade situations to help the teacher
- monitor activities being done by younger children
- collect locally available materials
- make toys and teaching aids out of locally available materials for younger children
- supervise and help in keeping the school and surroundings clean and attractive
- plant trees and grow local vegetables with the help of the teacher
- check cleanliness of younger children
- help in organizing functions, bal melas etc
- form discussion groups/clubs to help understand problems and what needs to be done to help the teacher to help other children
- take small responsibilities, which would ease the teacher's work like taking attendance, writing sums on blackboards etc.

B. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL

PARENTS/ OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AND LOCAL COMMUNITY

WHAT CAN THEY DO

Parents are the best source of information about their own child. They enable the teacher to understand the needs of children better especially those who have special needs.

Parents can provide information about.

INFORMER

⇒ what the child likes to do
⇒ what the child does well
⇒ what concerns, and/or expectation they have for their child
⇒ what changes they notice in the child's behaviour

Parents can be of special assistance to the teacher, directly in a number of ways. They can ensure that the children come to school regularly and punctually . They can also help by supplementing whatever is taught in the school not only in terms of academic skills but also habits and values. Local community members can also help the teachers for e.g. unemployed educated adolescents and retired persons would be particularly useful. Their involvement can be sought on a rotation or daily basis depending on the time they can spend in the school, their skills/abilities and interests for the following:

⇒ handling classroom activities especially for classes I & II or for specific areas like science and mathematics
⇒ ensuring children's coming to school punctually and regularly
⇒ collecting locally available materials/information

HELPER ASSISTANT

⇒ making low cost teaching aids
⇒ giving classroom management support through organising materials working with small groups and record keeping
⇒ helping in remedial classes
⇒ assisting in organizing functions, melas etc.

Besides the above they could also participate in:

MONITOR SUPERVISOR

⇒ monitoring the progress of their children regularly
⇒ supervising the daily teaching-learning activities
⇒ providing a regular feedback to the teacher, school and VEC so that further improvement can be made

Indirectly they can give support by:

MANAGER

⇒ collecting or giving money for materials repairs and building costs
⇒ helping the teacher in managing the available resources

in the school

All the above groups can help in mobilising and promoting participation of the community through:

MOBILISER - COORDINATOR

⇒ ensuring that all children are enrolled in the school and helping the school run an effective programmme

⇒ creating awareness amongst the community especially mothers and women regarding importance of sending children to school

⇒ encouraging participation of the local people in organising school activities particularly school functions

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

In any kind of partnership from the very beginning it is important to start and maintain a **continuous dialogue** between the identified **`partners'** and the **school - teacher**. It is necessary that all the `stakeholders' decide as to what is required for their children, how they can help and ways for doing so. This can be activated through informal **discussions**, **meetings** and **home visits** to individual homes by the school staff. The schools - communities should together discuss how they need to:

⇒ assess the schools strengths and weaknesses

⇒ identify priority areas and where they could contribute
identify goals and tasks in terms of available resources their skills, interests and time

This process could be further facilitated if a **village/local core group** in the form of Parent Teacher Associations, Mother Teacher Councils, Mahila Mandals and other women's group are constituted comprising community leaders, parents and volunteers. The core group could help in:

⇒ initiating discussions both formal and informal relating to the school/anganwadis/preschools

⇒ providing information to the community about what is needed and ways of doing this along with the teacher

⇒ developing linkages between the school and village community

⇒ developing required skills in those who want to help the teacher by organising orientation workshop by experts

⇒ bringing the community close to the school, making them feel the school belongs to them

⇒ identifying unemployed youth/retired persons who could help to supplement teaching in schools particularly multigrade setups

The various groups can carry out the identified functions in a number of ways by :

⇒ conducting awareness generation campaigns using folk media

⇒ organising joint orientation of key members in the community

⇒ training the village core group and other community members in how to work with teachers and promoting children's participation in school

⇒ organising village group discussions and meetings on a regular basis

VILLAGE EDUCATION COMMITTEE/LOCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE.

The Village Education Committee is a body constituted at the village level to achieve the participation and co-operation of the community for whom the school is functioning. It is democratically setup to provide leadership at the

WHAT CAN THEY DO

Broadly the **VEC/LMC** members can help the teacher in planning, implementation and monitoring of primary education by:

- setting annual targets regarding enrollment, attendance and retention of children.
- persuading parents to send their children to school
- supervising the regular attendance of the HM and teachers in school
- ensuring that the school atmosphere is stimulating and attractive
- ensuring that educational aids under the OB scheme and otherwise are regularly and properly used by teachers.
- making an effort to provide essential physical facilities and consumable items (mats, chalks etc.)
- ensuring that incentives and allowances are being given on time
- monitoring and supervising actual classroom activities conducted by the teacher
- ensuring linkages between preprimary and primary schools
- identifying volunteers who can help and assist the teacher
- making a school playground available for their children.
- undertaking repair or maintenance work of the school.
- planning competitions, trips, cultural programmes and functions with the school and community for the children.
- providing positive support to the teacher

- helping in the identification and selection of local teachers

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

The **VEC/LMC** should meet on a regular basis to plan their activities. They should also interact with other groups in the village i.e. MTC, PTA, Mahila Mandals, Committees for Pre-School Education etc. to strengthen linkages and avoid duplication of activities. There should be a monthly meeting with the CRC, BRC and BEO to discuss and reflect upon the ways support could be provided to improve the quality of school programme. Identification of persons in the village who could help the teacher by giving feedback to them for future planning and improvement could also be carried out by them.

LEVEL II - *SUB DISTRICT*

At the next level beyond the village/town we can consider to sublevels of administrative and resource support available to the teacher. These are at the cluster and block level. A cluster comprises anything between 8-20 village schools in a rural set up making access to support systems closer to the school. This is so since the area and numbers covered within a cluster are smaller and similarities greater than in the block. Therefore, addressing the teachers needs and requirements becomes easier.

The concept of using a cluster as an operational unit is not new as it has been in existence in Maharashtra in the form of Central Primary School Complexes for at least 2 decades. Under the APPEP also teacher centres was set up and strengthened to provide academic resource support to teachers. Recently this has gained further momentum with the launching of the DPEP in 1994-95. At present quite a few states i.e. Assam, M.P and A.P., have established Cluster Resource Centres or Teacher Resource Centres to promote closer interaction of experts with school - teachers by providing support, guidance and training, on a continuous basis.

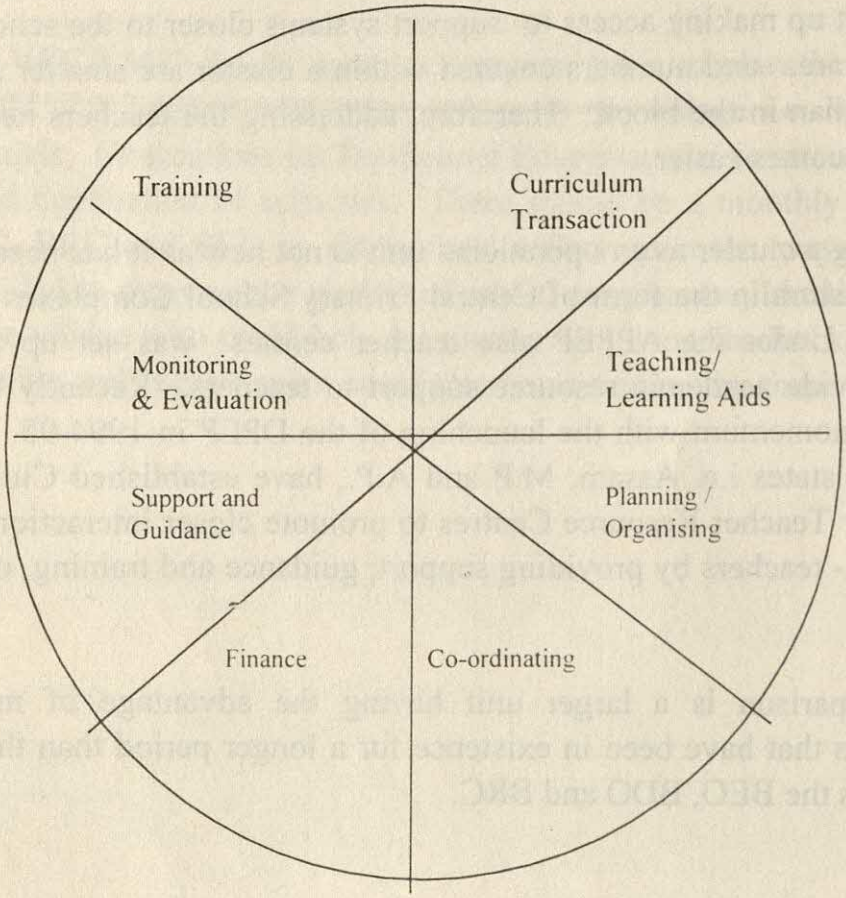
The block in comparison is a larger unit having the advantage of more permanent structures that have been in existence for a longer period than those at the cluster such as the BEO, BDO and BRC.

WHO CAN HELP

Against this background let us reflect upon who are the agencies/officials who can be help and support to the teacher. The major structures and associated personnel that could be involved in supporting the teacher are identified below:

- Cluster Resource Centre (CRC)
- Teacher Resource Centre (TRC)
- Block Resource Centre (BRC)
- Block Education Office (BEO)

At this level what comes across clearly is the shift in focus from partnerships with persons/groups at the local level to more formal institutions at this level. The roles of the sub district structures can be broadly classified into various functional areas under academic and administrative as depicted in the diagram below:



BLOCK- CLUSTER -TEACHER- RESOURCE CENTRE

Field experience shows us that in a district wherever both BRC and CRC or Teacher RC's are established the role of the CRC or TRC is purely that of an **academic resource base**, whereas the BRC has more administrative duties and responsibilities. However, it is suggested that CRC's be constituted in all blocks if the teachers are the focus and are to be provided help and support.

One of the main difficulties experienced by teachers particularly in remote areas is that they do not receive any feedback or guidance regarding their teaching. A resource centre at the cluster level can therefore be a very effective way of reaching teachers in schools and guiding them and helping them solve their immediate problems. It can also serve to identify the areas in which teachers need more training and guidance and can thus provide feedback for organising further training. The cluster resource centre coordinator should therefore be a competent primary teacher who should be given necessary orientation as a trainer to fulfill this requirement.

WHAT CAN THEY DO

All the three types of centres can provide academic resource support to teachers in the following ways:

- resolving academic problems faced by teachers
- making resource materials available to them.
- monitor, supervise and evaluate curriculum development, transaction and attainment of pupils
- conduct periodic need based training in different areas of work
- provide corrective feedback to teachers and pass on information to BRC in case of CRC's and DIET's in the case of BRC's
- provide on the spot guidance and help in teaching-learning activities
- develop materials for teaching-learning activities
- formulate monthly plans of action.

Besides this, BRC's can also compile feedback reports and provide necessary support to CRC's.

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

All the above activities can be done through:

⇒ conducting monthly meetings with teachers at the CRC or every school within a CRC on a rotation basis

⇒ periodic visits to schools on rotation basis by the CRC or BRC co-ordinator as the case may be to assess training needs and provide support
⇒ classroom observation of the teachers and how they conduct their activities
⇒ demonstration, discussion and peer review
⇒ establishing resource group/teams of 2 or 3 experts at the cluster and block levels that work together on a regular basis
⇒ setting up of Block Level Resource Groups who could assist in training the teachers and monitoring their work.

BLOCK EDUCATION OFFICE

WHAT CAN THEY DO ?

This office and its staff plays a crucial role in every district in the planning and implementation of primary education programme both administratively and academically. Some of the major activities that have a bearing on the teacher and delivery of education are given below:

- communicating the need for selection and posting requirements of teachers and infrastructural facilities to the district education office so as to be able to provide minimum facilities to all schools

- maintaining records on training of teachers in terms of their needs, frequency, content and continuous support

- ensuring necessary support to the schools to make them effective in their functions

- making budgetary decisions to provide both human (staff) and material resources which have a direct bearing on implementation of school activities

organising a team of experts (mobile) to provide support and guidance to teachers in curriculum transaction. This can be done on a rotation basis

- seeking support from the BDO and community
- planning and conducting training programmes periodically to upgrade teachers knowledge, skills and abilities
- arranging up community meetings to bring together parents, local community members, NGO's, VEC's and PRI's
- assessing the maintenance and repair requirements of schools
- encouraging the establishment of CRC's, TRC's and teacher peer groups for exchanging ideas, problems and resolving issues of common concern

HOW CAN THEY DO IT

They can do it by coordinating with BRC/CRC on one side and DIETs on the other and carrying out joint planning.

Besides this it is necessary that clear cut roles and job responsibilities of the staff within the BEO's office and outside involved in helping the teacher be detailed out. This will also help in avoiding duplication of work done by the BEO and BRC offices.

Categorising schools in terms of performance and identifying schools low in performance and work more intensively with them in a planned and need based manner which can serve as an effective school improvement programme .

LEVEL III - *DISTRICT*

WHO CAN HELP

At the district level the major institutions and personnel that can help the teacher in performing his/her duties are:

- District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) and Teacher Training Institutions (TTIs)
- District Education Office (DEO)

DIET/TTIs

At this level the DIET is the key institution created by the MHRD with the specific goal of improving the quality of education at the elementary stage and achieving the goal of UEE. It is visualised that a DIET will have seven branches with 24 faculty members and a principal to execute certain planned activities. Beside the DIET in many districts TTIs are also present. Both are largely responsible for training.

WHAT CAN THEY DO

Since DIET's have been set up with a specific purpose they are expected to provide an academic resource base through the conduct of the following activities:

- organisation of pre-service elementary teacher education programmes

- in-service training of primary school teachers, headmasters, heads of school complexes and supervisory staff
- orientation of VEC members, community leaders and other volunteers
- development of curricula, teaching - learning materials, testing and evaluation tools and low cost teaching aids
- field interaction during extension work
- field studies, action research and experimentation

Teachers training institutions deal with all aspects of teachers' training in terms of content and processes. Wherever DIET's do not exist or do not have the required number of staff members they could support the DIET in preparing teachers to perform the expected roles at the primary level. They can help in pre-service and in-service training on various aspects like : curriculum development, transaction, evaluation, action research, preparation of teaching - learning aids amongst others.

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

It is a felt need that there should be more active participation and involvement of DIETs in the district, particularly in the training, monitoring and supervision of teachers. This can be promoted by:

⇒ posting required number of staff members at DIETs

⇒ conducting orientation and training programmes for DIET principals and staff on what is required in the field, their specific roles and responsibilities and those of SCERT, NGO's and national institutes

⇒ developing a holistic goal directed intervention plan for the district integrating different inputs related to and not discrete activities

⇒ having a DIET person or team as members of the district committee and BRC.

⇒ encouraging DIETs to adopt clusters of schools and develop some into demonstration schools for training/ practice

⇒ coordinating with known experts, NGO's in the district to form a functional District Resource Group.

⇒ involving them in action research and field visits to schools, CRC's and BRC's

⇒ monitoring and supervision of DIET activities by the state level authorities is needed

⇒ Encouraging DIET faculty to plan their activities on a need - assessment basis and follow an implementation cycle of

Need Assessment ➡ Planning of Inputs ➡ Implementation

↑ ↓

Follow up & Evaluation of Impact and further assessment

The staff in teacher training institutions can be involved through orientation and training programmes to keep them updated on all the latest ideas and approaches so as to make pre-service training more field relevant and in tune with the thrust of the in-service training programmes. It is equally important to encourage their involvement in research in primary schools and community, as well as through representation in district and CRC co-ordination committees.

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE

WHAT CAN THEY DO

This is the most important administrative structure at the district level with not much of an academic role to play. The office can help in a number of ways by:

- collecting data and updating the same on all school related facilities and personnel

- ensuring that the minimum essential conditions are provided for in all schools, , as has been elaborated upon in the last chapter
- management of resources - financial, human and material
- posting ,transfer and housing for teachers
- coordinating between other district level structures i.e.DIET, hospitals, special schools amongst others to provide academic support to teachers
- monitoring , supervision and evaluation of all educational activities.

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

All the above mentioned roles /functions can be facilitated through:

⇒orientation of district education office staff. This is the first necessary step in generating awareness about their roles and responsibilities.

⇒ involving one or two person s from the office across all levels of functioning i.e. block, cluster village- school to monitor, supervise and provide feedback for further action

⇒ forming a core group committee to maintain an effective system of coordination with other district level structures

⇒ planning and establishing a mechanism to strengthen Panchayat - DEO linkages, specific to district needs and requirements

⇒ conducting an open-house periodically to listen to teachers problems and success stories.

LEVEL IV - STATE

WHO CAN HELP

At the state level the major institutions and personnel who can help are

- Policy makers
- State Councils of Educational Research and Training
- Directorate of Education
- Directorate of Social Welfare/ICDS

WHAT CAN THEY DO

⇒ Improve the existing service conditions of teachers particularly the posting and transfer policies
⇒ Provide a forum for redressal of teacher's grievances
⇒ Institute an effective system of accountability
⇒ Plan for adequate facilities in the schools
⇒ Consider alternative ideas for resource mobilization including involvement of corporate sector, or institution of educational cess, with a view to generate resources for improving school conditions
⇒ Provide need based guidance material and plan appropriate training for faculty members of DIETs and training institutions who will in turn train teachers, VEC's etc.

⇒ Preparing a realistically implementable curriculum keeping teaching time and facilities available with the teacher in mind

⇒ Prepare child friendly textbooks and other materials

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE

The identified institutions and personnel can help by:

- maintaining close communication with teachers, understanding their school related problems and formulating supportive policies
- appointing teachers as members on relevant committees so that they can participate in planning and have a sense of self worth
- evolving a system of accountability in participation with the teachers so that they own it and abide by it
- involving teachers in curriculum development and textbook/workbook development activities
- evolving a decentralized system of promotions linked with participation and performance of teachers so that teachers get motivated to perform better.
- encouraging Teachers' Federations to participate in professional activities and innovative programmes for improvement of primary education
- making necessary provisions and facilities for DIETs /BRC and CRC to be able to maintain closer contact with the field situation/teachers, and provide on site support of vehicles, budget for travel etc.
- making contingency available for teachers to create and maintain a good learning environment for child
- improving and expanding early childhood education facilities so that younger sibling below 5 years and under age children do not come into the primary classes.

SOME PARTICIPATORY TRAINING STRATEGIES

- *Large group discussions*
- *Small group discussions*
- *Discussion in Pairs*
- *Brainstorming*
- *Role play by small groups of participants on given situations relevant to theme of the session*
- *Demonstration and Practice Teaching*
- *Material Preparation and Skill Development in use of material*
- *Games*
- *Visually Integrated Participatory Procedures (VIPP Technique with use of charts & Cards)*

APPROACH II - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INSERVICE TRAINING

Developing partnerships for supporting the teacher is one major way in helping them and thereby indirectly promoting primary education. However, this is not enough as in these times of rapid change it becomes absolutely essential that teachers are trained adequately on what is needed to be done within classrooms. Teacher education is to be viewed as a continuous programme wherein the pre and in-service components are inseparable. Unfortunately the pre-service training is often far removed from what the teacher is required to do in the actual classroom situation.

Assuming that the goal of pre-service education is to provide awareness on various educational issues and develop basic competencies, the goal of INSET or **`on the job training'** assumes all the more importance and relevance if change is to be implemented by the teacher and school reforms are to be successful.

This calls for updating and improving upon teachers existing knowledge, skills and abilities in keeping with local communities needs and work life realities. If training is to accomplish this then the crucial question we need to ask ourselves is:

WHAT KIND OF TRAINING?

This depends upon our stand about the teacher and training. In this entire discussion we have accepted that the teacher:

- is central to educating the child
- is the most important person who can bring about changes in the classroom processes
- needs to be helped and supported
- is capable of understanding and therefore putting training inputs into actual practice
- needs not only knowledge but skills and attitudinal change for new ideas
- training cannot be the only input for teacher development.

Therefore Training needs to be viewed as :

"A continuous strategy for providing education and support to teachers on the job and not a one time activity or programme."

This has been further detailed out in terms of some important features to be given attention while planning in service training.

IMPORTANT FEATURES

It should be :

• **Participatory**	Keeping the entry level of teachers in mind and involving their active participation.
• **Need Based**	Local community, school and teacher specific
• **Onsite**	Teachers should be trained in their own school or schools similar to where they work
• **Modular**	Focusing on one theme for a short period of time
• **Practical (Hands On , Experience Based)**	Demonstration by the trainer/s in the actual school situation

During and after the training, teachers should be able

- **Interspersed with Try Outs** — to try out the various inputs in their schools which should be monitored and feedback given
- **Reflective** — During and after training, time to think and improve on the feedback provided, should be an inherent aspect of the programme.
- **Periodic** — Training on the same theme should be given at different points of time in the year.
- **Supportive** — Experts should provide guidance and support to teachers not only during but after training as well on a regular basis.
- **Field Linked** — The methodology/materials advocated should be in tune with field realities.
- **Encourage Community Involvement** — Local communities should be aware of what is happening and take part in the planning decision making and implementation process.
- **Able To Use Teacher Peer Group** — These groups should provide a forum for meetings, exchange of ideas, problems and demonstrations by teachers in one cluster of schools.
- **Followed Up** — The training faculty should, as an essential part of training maintain contact with the participants after training and assess the impact for further planning.

WHO CAN DO THIS AND HOW CAN THIS BE DONE?

WHO	HOW
DIET	School visits by mobile team/experts
Teacher Training Institution	Demonstrations
BRC	BRC/CRC Orientation and training
BEO	Meetings
CRC	Discussion and review
NGO(s)	Discussions, Demonstration

Remember *Orientation and training needs to be given to others as well such as parents, community members, members of the VEC, educational authorities, curriculum developers, textbook writers, authors amongst other persons. Only then can the best results be got for our young children. Therefore both creating and providing support system along with training are of vital importance if the primary education system is to be strengthened to meet the needs of all children, leading to their all round development.*

In the final analysis, there can be no two opinions that the government has the primary responsibility of providing basic education to all children below the age of 14 years, in the country. The quality of the education imparted finally in the school can, however, be assured only if the community becomes more aware of what it should look for in the primary school, its own role and responsibilities in the running of the school and its right to ask for quality where it is not evident.

Developing in the community a sense of ownership for the school as being ' theirs' and not the ' government's', which is to be run by them with the teacher as a 'partner' who needs to be helped and supported . This can go a long way in providing all our children the kind of basic education they so well deserve.

MOVING ON.....

As we come to the end of Part 1 of this document let us recall what is it that has been discussed through these seven chapters. As you may recall, we began by trying to understand some of the major concerns in the area of primary education today, particularly with regard to the curriculum. Keeping these in view, and more than that , keeping the ' child' and the aims of primary education in view, some changes in the curriculum framework have been suggested, both in terms of content and methodology. The document concludes with a clear message that the aims of primary education cannot be satisfactorily achieved unless a) certain essential learning conditions are provided to the child and b) the responsibility of ensuring quality education is shared jointly by all concerned , but more particularly the local community whose children go to the school and the teachers who teach in the school.

From here we move on to Part 2 of this document . In this part we have attempted to detail out the specific learning outcomes expected for each level with regard to each of the four curricular areas. We have also made suggestions for related content and methodology along with specific examples of teaching- learning activities and evaluation techniques.

Keeping in mind some alternative situations existing in the system, a section each has also been devoted to guidelines for Multigrade classrooms, Integrated curriculum / approach to teaching and approach to teaching when the medium of instruction is different from the home language of the child.

Our hope , as we share " The Primary Years " widely, is that it will be helpful in starting a much needed discussion / debate on this very significant area of primary education curriculum .We expect this discussion will then lead on to more joyful, meaningful and child-friendly practices becoming visible in the primary classes of our schools, in the years to come.